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# LONDON LIFE AT THE POLICE COURTS



LONDON: WARD AND LOCK, 158, FLEET STREET.



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LONDON LIFE

AT

THE POLICE-COURTS



W. H. WATTS

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# LONDON LIFE

AT

## THE POLICE-COURTS

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE LONDON POLICE-COURTS.

THERE are about eight principal police-courts in London proper, grouped round the head court, Bow Street. Each court has its special district, its officially defined limits, in which stipendiary magistrates daily sit to administer justice, with almost absolute powers. Few can estimate the advantage to society of a fully-qualified magistrate—fully qualified by legal experience, by worldly wisdom, by unassailable independence, and by human sympathies. A mere hard, dry, technical lawyer in such a position is a grievous mistake; it is something more, it is a positive mischief to the district. An experience of what magistrates generally were five-and-thirty years ago and what they are now justifies me in saying that the present age has no reason to be dissatisfied with the selection that has been made.

Minor justice is impartially administered; the high and the low are on perfect equality before the Bench; and although a positive misdeed sometimes escapes punishment, the circumstance is rather to be attributed to the defects of the law than to the want of discrimination on the part of the magistrate. Unassailable as appointments to the Metropolitan Bench have been of late years, still it may be doubted whether the Home Office has any fixed rules to guide it in its selection. This I hold to be a grave defect; for I have known instances where other than the public good has led to an appointment, and where such appointment has been productive of mischief not easily repaired. It would be difficult to define the duties of a paid police-magistrate; it would be wrong to confine these duties within very strict limits. A magistrate is frequently called upon to act extra-judicially, in order to deal with some public scandal, to check the career of some artful offender that the police are dubious of dealing with, to give protection to tradesmen under circumstances for which the law has made no provision; above all, he is often called upon to act promptly where young girls, women, and wives are to be guarded from contamination, or shielded from immediate brutality. A magistrate who dares not or will not act on an emergency, perhaps against the strict letter of the law, but by the readiest mode of meeting that emergency, is unfit for his post, and his appointment casts a censure on the judgment of the power that appointed him. I am so *persuaded of the incalculable importance of proper appointments to the Magisterial Bench, that I would*

rather hear of an incompetent Lord Chancellor or Lord Chief Justice than an incompetent magistrate. I do not purpose to make this chapter a dry dissertation on magisterial qualifications or disqualifications; I shall content myself with the above remarks, which I hope will be allowed to serve as a sort of introduction to my readers.

The following sketches have the merit of being copied from actual life. The main facts have come under my own observation, and it is to fancy only that I have been indebted for what I will term the accessories. These sketches do not appear before the public for the first time. About twenty-five years ago I published *Oddities of London Life*, and about a couple of years since *My Private Note-Book*. Both works were charged to the public on what may be called the high scale; and as the taste of the million runs towards cheap reprints, I have made up the present volume from the two above-named works, adding, however, a good deal that is new, so as to afford to the purchaser as much amusement as he can well expect for his money. I will just say one word with reference to the police-cases, which are revived as a means of affording, I hope, a laugh for an idle half-hour. It may be thought that the cases are fictitious, or mere exaggerations. They are all founded on fact, and their merit, if they have any, consists not in ludicrous exaggeration, so much as in being an attempt to copy closely the diction and comic peculiarities of the characters who came before the Bench. My readers will be able to judge of the kind of composition which has gone out

of fashion, so far as the newspaper-press is concerned, and which afforded their fathers, it is believed, no inconsiderable share of daily amusement.

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## CHAPTER II.

### MARLBOROUGH-STREET POLICE-COURT.

THIRTY years ago I first took my place as Marlborough-Street "comic" police-reporter of the *Morning Herald*, on the bench usually allotted to the press. At that time Mr. Wight, the well-known author of *Mornings at Bow Street*, who had just given up his engagement to take sub-editorial duties, casting about for a successor,—the humorous portraitures of actual life from police-courts then furnished the distinguishing feature of the *Morning Herald*,—eventually made his selection in my favour. I was duly installed, at the then handsome stipend of five guineas weekly, to "dress up" cases in the "humorous" line for the special delectation of *Morning-Herald* readers.

Thirty years ago this police-court and its arrangements were upon a totally different footing to that on which they now stand. The court was not, as now, held on the first-floor of the private house in Great Marlborough Street known as the police-office; it was located on the ground-floor,—the front room being appropriated to the magistrates as their private room, and the back premises fitted up with bench, bar, and *seats, so as to present something like the semblance of a place where justice was decently administered.*

As the court and its avenues were comparatively limited in extent, it frequently occurred that every part became inconveniently crowded whenever cases of weight and importance were brought to the office; and such was the reputation of the magistrates, and such the expertness and experience of the officers attached to the court, that a larger proportion of celebrated charges found their way to this locality than to any other of the police-courts—Bow Street, the chief office, not excepted. Indeed, the Marlborough-Street Police-Court has always kept up its reputation for what, in reporters' language, is known as "good" cases. The jurisdiction has something to do with this; the Marlborough-Street district embracing those parishes in which the leading tradesmen of the nobility chiefly reside, in which the principal hotels and clubs are situated, and in which night-houses, hells, and "cracksmen's" cribs were at one period most abundantly found. From these sources the *best* cases—estimating them by their magnitude, popular interest, and the position of the parties concerned—were sure to emanate. Again, a very large portion of "country business" was brought to the court, in consequence of the special employment of its officers, whose renown always stood deservedly high. Indeed, it is only necessary to name some few of its celebrities—for even among police-officers of the old school, heroes in their way were not uncommon—to recall the sensation made by cases which have faded out of recollection, but which now form the most stirring portions of our criminal statistics.

Among the leading officers are to be named Plank, Foy, Goddard, Schofield, Ballard, Craig, and Clements, all of whom were more or less noted for qualities somewhat higher than those possessed by the common class of thief-takers. In the course of these pencillings I shall have to bring under review some of their exploits, and this will enable our readers—and we hope their name is legion—to judge whether their reputation was or was not well merited.

The prisoners' room, in which prisoners waited their turn for examination, was at the bottom of the passage leading to the court,—a most inconvenient arrangement; the clerk's office was just beyond the prisoners' room; and at the end of a paved alley were situated the principal cells—one unusually strong, for cases of murder and other capital felonies. This cell has a dark but deeply-interesting history all its own. But as it frequently occurred that the "drunk and disorderlies," especially on Mondays, were too numerous to be accommodated in the range of cells beyond the office, there were some three or four additional cells improvised out of the coal and wine cellars belonging to the private house; and in these dens—they were literally dens, in size and appearance—scores of offenders were crammed, principally women; in summer enduring the tortures of the Calcutta Black Hole, constantly raving for air and water; in the winter experiencing Siberian severities, and frequently so benumbed by cold as to be obliged to have assistance *to enable them to mount the stairs in order to reach the prison-van.*

For years this disgraceful condition of things existed. The press in vain exposed its scandals; the Home Office would do nothing. The plea put forward was economy; but the general belief was that it arose from the opposition of a nobleman whose mansion abutted on the precincts of the court, and who would not consent that a new and suitable edifice should be built on the ample space denominated the garden, as it would thereby overlook his study, and otherwise interfere with his private comfort and convenience. Be that as it may, the evil has at last been remedied by the erection of a new and handsome court at the back of the old premises.

Nor are the general arrangements of the court the only changes that have occurred. The magisterial system has also undergone material modification. Thirty years ago, it was necessary to have a jury of two or three magistrates to decide cases of assault and some peculiar classes of cases. There were then three paid magistrates attached to each court; and as two magistrates attended in the daily *rota*, whenever it was necessary to have a third, one of the "unpaid" was always found at hand to discharge the duty.

I have already stated that I first came to this court in the position of *comic* reporter. I may as well here say a few words on the subject of a species of literary composition which has passed out of the hands of the press, and which has been taken possession of principally by the *serials*.

Forty years ago, until about twenty years from

the present day, the "humorous" delineation of *real* life was mainly confined to one or two newspapers. The writers of that day—the Purcells, the Hayneses, the Wights, the Conways,—kind reader, will you add your very humble servant?—and some half-dozen others, whose very names have gone out of recollection—undoubtedly laid the foundation of that peculiarly English kind of literature which Messrs. Thackeray, Dickens, and their legion of imitators, for the last twenty years have rendered so widely popular. How far clever writers of this school have been indebted to the style of humour of their less-known predecessors, might be a curious inquiry. It will not, however, be going too far to assert that forgotten humorous police delineations of character have furnished the "idea" for some of the most amusing and believed-to-be-original characters in some of the most popular works of our most popular comic authors.

It is somewhat singular that a kind of writing so generally attractive should have entirely dropped out of notice as far as newspapers are concerned. The press has not been enlivened with a truly "humorous" police-case for many a day. If the heaviness of politics and criminal charges has been diversified recently by light writing, it has been mainly through translations from certain foreign journals, founded unquestionably on the model furnished by the English style of humorous reporting.

One reason why no comic cases are now to be seen *in the newspapers* may possibly arise, not so much *from the indisposition* of the proprietors to pay for

this kind of literary matter, as from the fact that materials for humour are now more scanty than they were.

The march of education, the spread of cheap knowledge, the nearer approximation of classes, have worn away old broad distinctive lines, and have obliterated or destroyed much of that rough originality which once constituted so large and so conspicuous a portion of what may be called the *individuality* of the lower orders of English society. Acts of Parliament have had something to do with this change by abolishing, or very much changing, the characteristic occupations of many special classes from which materials for humorous description could once be abundantly drawn. Where are the running dustmen? where the "Charles"? where the "chummies"? where the twenty-caped hackney-coach "jarvies"? They have disappeared, or, if they still exist, have merged into the common herd; and their sons of the present day have certainly lost much of the racy peculiarities of their sires of the past.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### MY INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESS.

I FANCY I plunged rather too plumply *in medias res* when I commenced my press "recollections" at the period of receiving my appointment at Marlborough-Street Police-Court. The present, I think, is a good opportunity to state how, why, and by what means I came to adopt the press at all as a profession.

It will suffice to say that my original destination in life was mercantile. I was sent to a public school to learn commercial languages and commercial requisites; but instead of "useful" knowledge, I acquired a good deal of "useless" lumber, some Latin, some Greek, more geometry than algebra, and a strong notion that the bent of my "genius" was decidedly towards literature, not commerce—a mistake that I never had cause to regret but once, and that once extended over my whole life.

The hallucination I laboured under was very much fostered by the secret production of a tragedy, the plot and dialogue of which envious people might possibly say were filched from Shakespeare; a melodrama, which would afford ground for the belief that either Schiller had stolen from me, or I from Schiller; a poem—the completion of *Don Juan*—a feat Byron was never able to accomplish; and a Scotch novel in three volumes, which somehow bore a remarkable resemblance in all but genius and originality to Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*.

I venerated with profound veneration those immortal literary names, ancient and modern, which had enlightened and instructed the world. I thought the roll of fame, though crowded, yet contained room enough for *one* name more—a name only known to myself, and which only myself was destined to communicate to the world.

With qualifications such as I have indicated, it is *no wonder that at twenty-two or thereabouts I determined that the world should be no longer in ignorance*

of the talents of a "certain person;" and the channel I selected through which to impart the secret was the press. But then, to make my way to editor or proprietor was a puzzling affair. I knew no one connected, directly or indirectly, with newspapers. This was a damper, to be sure; but at that happy period of life trifles of this, or indeed of any, sort had no formidable influence or weight.

I saw a way at once to overcome the difficulty: I had only to write to the known editors, enclose a specimen of, as yet, unrecognised genius, and an engagement, I felt assured, would promptly follow.

The chief difficulty was in the selection of that newspaper editor who was to be the fortunate possessor of my valuable assistance. I decided, however, in order to prevent jealousy among these touchy gentry, that the best way would be to write to them altogether, to state facts candidly, and, at the same time, to hint that the first-comer would be first served. I wrote letters—masterly in composition, as I conceived, yet toned down with obvious modesty—to all the morning papers; and having seen them carefully posted, I waited a day or two with exemplary patience. The day or two stretched to a week; and I began to have a suspicion that neither proprietors nor editors of morning papers were entitled to that character for ready discrimination which they enjoyed by popular consent.

I resolved to give the evening papers a turn. Letters were accordingly sent round, but no replies *were vouchsafed*. The last letter was to the *Courier*, *then on the wane* of its popularity, once the organ of

eager politicians, who scrambled during the war—so the rumour goes—for early copies of second editions at the rate of half-a-guinea each.

Another week passed, and all hope had nearly fled. I was about condemning summarily the whole batch of press men, evening and morning, as unqualified blockheads and envious monopolisers, when a letter was put into my hand which changed my views in a twinkling. It was a letter from the *Courier* office, couched in the kindest and most familiar terms, apologising for unavoidable delay in answering my note, inviting me to come to the Strand any day after four o'clock, to ask for the editor, and to be prepared to name the department I was desirous of filling on the paper. The letter was signed "Eugenius Roche."

Feeling fully satisfied that true merit could not be wholly overlooked, even in that degenerate age, I made my way quickly to the *Courier* office, and on sending in my card was instantly ushered into a back room, where sat a tall, spectacled, benignant-looking gentleman. As soon as I presented myself, he rose with a stare of unmistakable astonishment. He looked at my card; he looked at me.

"Jonathan Potts," said he; "why really—are you the gentleman who wrote to me, and whose card I now hold?"

"I am," said I, rather, as the phrase of the day went, "dropping down on my luck" at this interrogation.

"*Bless me, bless me!*" said he; "what an absurd *mistake!* I thought it was one of my oldest and

dearest friends—one of the oldest contributors to the press—who had written to me. Your name and his name are precisely similar. You must have been very much astonished at the free-and-easy style of letter you received."

"I certainly was pleasantly surprised," I said; "but having been almost reduced to despair, the sensation was too agreeable not to be welcomed at the time. I had written so many letters in vain, and hoped against hope so long, that your letter was doubly welcome; and I can hardly express to you the extent of my present disappointment."

"Well, well," said he, with that amiability which distinguished him throughout his literary career, "perhaps the disappointment may not turn out to be so thorough as you anticipate. What can you do?"

"I'm afraid," said I modestly, "very little. I have had no press experience yet."

"Ah," said he, shaking his head, "that's unlucky, and I am afraid I shall be able to do nothing for you. The *Courier* only makes use of the services of experienced hands. Can you report?"

"I don't think," said I, "that I am quite, though very nearly, in the position of the bumpkin who, when asked if he could play on the fiddle, replied he did not know, as he never had tried. I have never reported; but I think I could report if I tried."

"There, again," said he, "only experienced reporters can hope for employment on the *Courier*. All I can promise is, if you send any thing that we can insert, I will give you a trial."

With this opening I was bound to be satisfied. I thanked him warmly, took my leave, and, as I shall perhaps have occasion to mention, earned my first guinea on the press through this introduction.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE "PENNY-A-LINER."

A QUARTER of a century ago, although the "press" was then, unquestionably, a "great fact," it was not the vast power it confessedly now is. To the conductors of, and contributors to, the press a quarter of a century ago, are undoubtedly due the merit of having laid the foundation of the status and the influence it has acquired—a status and influence which it is enlarging almost daily.

Nowadays the press is no mystery. "Gentlemen of the press" are as common and plentiful as mushroom. The case was a little different twenty-five years ago. There was no lack of contributors of all grades even at that bygone-generation epoch, but they were not bodily before the public eye; indeed, a retiring feeling, not arising, however, from superfluous modesty, was, in a certain sense, the press characteristic, possibly because the profession was one of doubtful and as yet unrecognised position.

The "press" with the "mob" was a sort of abstraction. Every body either felt or admitted the moral *and positive influence* which it every where exercised —*the practical force* with which it operated on public

affairs and opinion; but very few seemed to have any clear notion of its whereabouts, its personality, or its material existence.

Now and then an "editor," as a sort of *lusus nature*, could be pointed out at some public festival, or his bodily presence discovered as the "lion" at some out-of-the-way tavern; while "reporters," during session of Parliament especially, might be commonly seen in batches on the back benches of the old House of Commons and in the small taverns adjacent; but, beyond these tangible evidences of actual existence, it was a difficult problem for the public at large to solve how newspapers were got up daily, and where were located the labourers in that mysterious and not over-productive vineyard.

It is not my purpose just yet to speak of appointed editors or reporters, either of the past or present school. I propose to bring before my readers a class of contributors quite as indispensable as either of those two constituent parts of a daily newspaper, and twice as popular. I refer to the "penny-a-liner"—the unit of a class *sui generis*; not, however, the penny-a-liner of the existing time, but of the particular period to which I have already referred.

The profitable business of "penny-a-lining"—a misnomer, however, for the general scale of payment in the palmy days of the press was three-halfpence per line for town matter, twopence for country—had become a kind of monopoly. It was in comparatively few hands; but those hands belonged to men several of whom were of the highest order of intellect, and were

the possessors of varied attainments. Some of these "outsiders" preferred the independence, the ease, and the profits of their position to regular engagements; others adhered to "lining" because whisky-toddy, porter, tobacco, and freedom had attractions too potent for their idiosyncrasies. About half a dozen first-rate "liners," who had the monopoly of the papers, carefully guarded every avenue from interlopers; they mapped out amongst themselves the various departments and districts; and it was a point of honour not to poach on any part of any of the recognised fraternity's allotted manor.

The "dismounted," as they were facetiously termed, held their nocturnal gatherings at the Ben Jonson, in Shoe Lane.

Turning from Fleet Street into Shoe Lane, you come upon a dingy public-house down a short passage; this is still the Ben Jonson, but, alack! not the thriving Ben Jonson of former years.

The renown once conferred upon this public-house as the recognised head-quarters of the press, attracted all the respectability of the ward. The alderman, the deputy, and leading common councilmen, might be nightly seen among the guests. They were glad to hear, in anticipation of the morning papers, the latest intelligence of the latest murder, the freshly-delivered Old-Bailey verdict, and the numbers on a division which would in all probability put ministers out of office.

*I ask you to fancy a room about twenty feet long by twelve feet wide, with a mahogany table down the*

centre, closely-packed wooden chairs on each side, at the top a raised arm-chair,—the seat of honour, for years occupied by a Ludgate-Hill watchmaker,—and in one corner a small square table, exclusively reserved for the "liners" to write their "special" or their "flimsy" reports upon, respecting which I must explain the difference. A "special" report was where one of the dismounted had been engaged by the editor to forage out the particulars of, say, a fire, murder, or execution exclusively for his paper. A "flimsy" report was where the outsider preferred to write, by the aid of manifold, as many copies as there were papers, taking payment at so much per line for as much as the editor might choose to use. For "good business," such as "Murders," "Forgeries," "Love and Suicides," this latter mode of contribution is, or rather was, by far the most profitable. Take, for instance, such cases as John Thurtell's, for the murder of Weare; Corder's, for the murder of Maria Martin in the Red Barn; the murder and burning of the body of Paas, at Birmingham,—crimes that horrified and interested our fathers: the lucky penny-a-liner whose copy was preferentially used—for reports of such atrocities were then done incomparably better by the penny-a-liners than by the regular reporters—would have little difficulty in netting his ten or fifteen pounds per diem, as long as the trial or his ingenuity made the interest last.

It was in this direction I resolved to make my first attempt. I thought it would be a good preparation for the higher journalistic departments. I liked the

rollicking independence of the fraternity ; I liked the prospect of superior profit ; I did not then care for honour. I had paid several evening visits to the Ben Jonson, and had formed a sort of conversational acquaintance with one of the penny-a-lining fraternity who seemed most accessible to invitations to eleemosynary ale and oysters, and who, mistaking me for one of the "young swells" who now and then came eastward to imbibe a few notions from the wise men of Shoe Lane, was obligingly communicative on all the *minutiæ* connected with his profession, conceiving, as a matter of course, that he was bound in honour to give a *quid pro quo* for the good cheer he was invited to partake of without being called upon to bear any part of the reckoning.

I watched for an opportunity for some time. One evening I alighted on a short paragraph in the *Morning Advertiser*, to the effect that a fisherman named Malcolm had been shot in the arm by a gentleman named Moir, and that, as death was anticipated, the event had created a great sensation in the neighbourhood. I thought this a good opportunity for a venture on my own account. Profiting by the information I had surreptitiously picked up from my bibulous friend, I went round late at night to the various papers, stating that I was going to Shelhaven the next morning to inquire into the circumstances, and adding that I proposed to send a full account if the facts proved to be of sufficient importance. I received a *conditional promise* that my "copy" should be used *if none of their "regular" contributors sent any thing.*

The next morning I set out on my first newspaper expedition. I shall not recount the difficulties—comic and serious, for I had abundance of both—which I experienced before I could either find out the locality of the event, or make my way to Shelhaven Creek. When I did arrive there, my labours were well rewarded. I found that the wounded man had just died, that Captain Moir was in custody, and that a coroner's inquest was fixed to take place the next Thursday. I put together a very readable account of the unhappy affair, which I wrote out in manifold for every paper, thinking that it would whet public curiosity for further details at the inquest. I reached Town in good time to give all the papers copy for the next morning. Profiting by my knowledge of the Ben Jonson junta, I took the precaution of stating at the end of my report that the inquest was fixed, not for *Thursday*, which was the fact, but for *Friday*; a *ruse* of which I reaped the full benefit, as will be seen in the sequel.

The following morning, to my intense delight, while breakfasting at Peele's Coffee-house, I read, without missing a word in all the seven papers, my first report; in which I felt, no doubt, I had blended together style, pathos, and fact in a manner not altogether unworthy of the "Sensation School" of the present day. The next evening I was at the "Ben," and there also was the *clique* of "liners."

"Seen the 'Melancholy and Tragic Event'" (so I had headed my paragraph) "in the papers?" said one.

"Oh, yes; it's Tom Akland's."

"That be ——!" (the cleverest gentlemen are not always the most refined in their language; this specially applies to gentlemen of the press). "It isn't a bit like Tom Akland's style. It's from the Essex cobbler of the *Chelmsford Clodhopper*. Why, who but a yawnips, that mends shoes one half the week and goes to case the other; would pump out this kind of country muck? 'But, alas! hope was doomed to disappointment. Death at last put an end to a week of mortal agony and protracted suffering.' Don't that smell of the lapstone, eh? But I see the inquest is on Friday. It will be worth going to."

"Oh, yes," said the liners in chorus, "it's a joint-stock job; we'll all be in it."

I was a little nettled at the criticism on my first production. I attributed, I still think correctly, the quiz on my "style" to sheer envy, though I have since changed that style. I hoped, however, to have my modicum of revenge in good time.

On Thursday, accordingly, I was again at Shelhaven. No one from the press was present at the court but myself and the shoe-making representative of the *County Clodhopper*. The evidence was very long. Many will yet remember the unhappy case. Captain Moir, a gentleman of fortune, of warm temper, had shut up a path over his lawn to the river. A fisherman named Malcolm persisted in committing the trespass of crossing the lawn, though warned off by the captain. The fisherman is believed to have *used bad language* to the irritated captain, and to *have declared* that he would come back that way in

the evening, in spite of prohibition to the contrary. The captain went home, loaded a pair of small pistols (here was the strong part of the case, which afterwards hanged him), and on seeing the fisherman again crossing the lawn, rushed out, threw himself on his pony, and overtaking him, commenced an altercation, which ended by the captain firing one of the pistols, and lodging a ball in the arm of the fisherman. The wound would not heal; inflammation set in, and the man died.

I had taken a heap of notes, when the county reporter made an arrangement with me to give his paper the conclusion for a couple of guineas, as he had to be back at Chelmsford at a stated hour. This was my first piece of unexpected good fortune. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder; and after despatching a brief report to the county paper, I went to bed, resolving to write out fully for the London papers the mass of evidence I had in my note-book. I rose early, reached Billericay in the morning, and took an outside place to London. About eleven o'clock, as I was passing through Ingatestone, I saw five familiar faces trudging up the road, dusty, hot, and footsore. I recognised them as my Ben-Jonson critics, in full trot to the inquest.

After I reached London, six hours' hard writing enabled me to turn out a couple of columns of matter, every line of which, in that happy age of editorial jealousy and competition, was sure to be inserted, and, *what is better*, paid for. Feeling particularly elated *at the golden harvest before me*, I made my way to

the "Ben" about ten o'clock at night, and while indulging in the extravagance of a lobster and bottled ale, my five gentlemen turned in, travel-stained and rather out of temper.

"What a thundering bloke that Chelmsford yokel was, to shove down Friday instead of Thursday for the inquest!" said the leader. "If we hadn't known where to find Bartlett, the coroner, we should have looked precious spooney when we came back. Come, my lads, bring out the tools, and let's strap at it."

The five liners went to work busily for an hour, when one of them, gathering up the copy as far as it had been written, proposed, as it was getting late, to take it round, and tell the printers the remainder would soon follow. This was assented to, and he left; but returned in marvellous quick time, with a face of dismay.

"Knock off, my boys," said he. "We're all done dirty brown. Copy has been in at all the papers, and 'up' these three hours."

"None of your gammon, Bob," said one of the writers, regarding the speaker with a suspicious look.

"I tell you," said the first speaker, "the copy is all in type—two columns at least. Lawson, of the *Times*, showed it to me, and the name on the copy is 'Jonathan Potts.'"

My special friend here cast a scrutinising glance at me, and then appeared as if he had a sudden revelation of light. He came and sat himself by my side.

"*How do? We didn't see you here last night, nor the night before.*"

"No," said I evasively; "I was a little way in the country."

"In the country, eh! Any where near Shelhaven?" said he.

"Why, yes," said I; "somewhere thereabouts."

"Perhaps your name is Potts?"

"It is."

"D—— my sister's cousin's cat!" said he, with great liveliness; "I see it all. What a blessed pump I've been! But, confound it! why didn't you tip me the 'office' when you passed us at Ingatestone,—for now I'm sure it was you on the top of the coach,—and not let us go tramping forty miles for nix, besides sticking up five 'bob' at the bar for expenses, to be paid out of what we were to get for copy? You ought to pay your footing, and 'stand Sam' for a little blow-out, especially as you'll make a 20*l.* note by this job."

"Well," said I, "if it turns out as well as you say, I'll pay your score, and put down half-a-sovereign for a beefsteak supper."

My friend communicated this piece of intelligence to his colleagues. They were obliged to be content with it; and when the supper came off the next night, a solemn compact was entered into to admit me into their corps, share and share alike.

The *honourable* way this compact was carried out shall be described in my next.

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## CHAPTER V.

## SOME OF THE MINOR MYSTERIES OF THE PRESS.

BEFORE I go on with my story, I may be permitted to say a few more "last" words respecting the mysteries of the penny-a-liner's vocation.

The old, and, I may add, the *aboriginal*, race of penny-a-liners were, taken in the lump, clever fellows. They were masters, or rather inventors, of the art of "dressing-up" paragraphs, so as to give them a character of speciality and interest. Their talent was not confined—as small writers in cheap publications of the day have ignorantly asserted—to the business of exaggerating the dimensions of "gigantic gooseberries," or, by taking thought, adding a cubit to the longitude of some "Patagonian cucumber." They were real geniuses in their way, and have, in their vocation, afforded the newspaper public many a hearty laugh and many a pungent thrill through the agency of facts not always based on the soundest foundations.

The object of the "penny-a-liner" in discarding simple Saxon words and using sesquipedalian polysyllables was not—as ignorantly asserted by authorlings not possessing a tithe of the "liner's" real talent—to create or exhibit "false taste," but, really and truly, to add to honest gains. Being paid by the line, the great aim of the "liner" was to increase the number of lines, by ingenious means, in an artistic manner. *In the hands of a "regular" reporter, the details of a "tragic event" or a "melancholy occurrence" would*

be given dryly or succinctly. A penny-a-liner, handling the same matter, would, by the judicious application of verbal ornamentation, give the affair undreamt-of life and interest.

To illustrate my meaning, here are two reports of the same occurrence copied from the papers of the day. They are both reports of the same speech; one furnished by the "regular" of the *Times*, the other, manifolded for the rest of the papers by the self-same Jack Holliday, already referred to as my quondam friend.

I must first explain that the occasion was an election of common councilmen for one of the City wards. The elected was a cheesemonger, more remarkable for the quality of his goods than the excellence of his oratory.

*Times* report:

"Mr. Cheshire said he couldn't find words,—he was no orator,—but he thanked them all round; and, though he couldn't speak well, he could vote well. He was not worthy of the honour done to him; but they all knew him—he would do his best. They might find a better, but not an honester man; and he wished them all the same success he had met with, and long life to enjoy it."

The "penny-a-liner version, "spun out" and interjectionally interlarded for the benefit of his pocket,—as accurate, but not quite so literal,—appeared in the other morning papers in this form:

"Mr. Cheshire, on being unanimously called for by the electors, presented himself before them, and

bowing all round, with evident emotion, said: Fellow-wardsmen, friends, and fellow-parishioners, overpowered as I am by the honour you have just conferred upon me in electing me to be your representative in the Common Council of the first commercial city in the civilised world, I cannot find suitable words in which to thank you. (Applause.) I do not pretend to oratory. (Cries of 'So much the better.') I am no orator; but from the bottom of my heart I thank you all round. (Cheers, and cries of 'Bravo, Cheshire!') Though I may not be able to speak well, yet I can vote well. (Renewed cheers.) I feel myself totally unworthy to fill the high position in which I have now been placed. (Cries of 'No, no!') You all know what I am. (A voice: 'You're a trump!') You all know me. In the face of this respectable meeting of my constituents I solemnly pledge myself to do my best—my very best—for the common interests of the ward. (Cries of 'We know you will!') You might find a better man ('No, no!'); but you never shall say you can find an honester representative. (Loud cheers.) In all sincerity I wish you all the same success as I have met with; and I fervently hope, under Divine Providence, you may all live long enough to enjoy it. The worthy common councilman here resumed his seat amidst loud and general plaudits."

The eight lines of the "regular" were expanded into twenty-eight by the "liner."

I need not say that neither common councilman nor *penny-a-liner* regretted the figure they made in the *papers the next morning*.

One of the greatest masters of verbal amplification was this renowned and once well-known John, or familiarly Jack, Holliday. The late Tom Haynes was a genius of the same school, but in a more cultivated and classical form. When quizzed respecting the profuse sprinkling of "cheers" and "counter cheers," "hear, hear," and "applause," in his common council and civic reports,—*"My dear fellow,"* said he *"I pay for my tobacco with them."* His confidential advice to me was, "Never, when writing manifold, use a *short* word where a *long* one—the longer the better—can be substituted, for it may *turn the line.*"

From these brief hints it will be seen there was something in the "art" that must be learned, and which did not, like Dogberry's reading and writing, "come by nature."

The "captain" of the "liners" was one Tom Conroy. On him devolved the duty of apportioning the labour and the districts among those who worked in partnership. My special friend Holliday, who evidently bore the "captain" no good will, one evening, under pressure of his sixth pint of Burton, whispered in confidence to me, "Take care of Tom, if ever you do any business with him; you'll find he's a ——— rogue, and would sell his grandfather's old wig if he got a chance."

The opening of Staines Bridge, at which King William the Fourth was announced to be present, was the first business of sufficient importance to engage the *attention of the coöperative Ben Jonsonians.* Accordingly the "captain," finding there were four of us

to be in it, allotted to each his part, the profits of which were not to be shared in common, but in the proportion to the amount of information each respectively contributed. Such was the plan adopted on particular occasions, the prudence of which had been more than once experienced. My part in this business was to give an account of the royal procession after it had set forth from Windsor Castle, and to describe the general behaviour of the populace: this, I was assured, was particularly important, the whole country being then in arms in reference to the Reform Bill. I thought my portion of work rather meagre, but I did not complain, as it was the first transaction; and accordingly, full primed with instructions, I made my way to the locality pointed out—a cross-road between Windsor and Staines, by which the royal carriages were expected to pass. There might, perhaps, have been half a dozen people lounging about; but I soon saw I had been “sold,” that, in fact, I should have nothing to describe, and that very likely I should be the expenses out of pocket, as the expenses were to be borne individually, and not to come out of the common earnings. The conveyances to London were so few from this out-of-the-way locality, that I did not get to Town until nearly ten o’clock. My visit was made to the “Ben” in no very placid humour. There sat the “captain” at the table—which was covered with manifold, already laid out—brimful of expectation, and boiling with impatience and vexation at the delay.

“*You the first here?*” said he gruffly. “Well, *you can’t have got much.* Did you tumble in with

Tom Conroy and Jack Holliday?"—my copartners,—inquired he.

"I don't very well see how I could tumble over any one, considering the ridiculous place you sent me to," said I rather pettishly.

"Haven't you got any thing?" said the "captain."

"Not a line worth writing," said I.

At this moment in staggered Tom Conroy.

"Missh'd the lasht coash, by shingo," hiccupped he. "Couldn't shee Holliday till after peshession to Stchainsh wash all passhd. Left Shack at Windsher, drunk ash a fiddlersh—fiddlersh—"

"You haven't been to Staines at all," roared the "captain" in a rage; "you've sold us, and so has Jack, and now we're in a pretty mess. Here," said he, turning to me, "it's of no use pumping Conroy, who's almost blind drunk; the papers expect copy, and I must write something. Can't you fudge up a 'par' or two?"

"Nothing whatever," said I; "the procession certainly passed the lane, but it was gone in a moment."

"Did you notice any thing particular?" inquired he anxiously.

"The only thing," I replied, "I noticed was, that one of the sheep from a flock just then coming down the lane ran under the feet of the leaders, and frightened the animals a little bit."

"What," said he, catching hold of me eagerly, "do you call that *nothing*? My dear fellow, tell every particular; be careful—recollect every circumstance."

Astonished at his sudden anxiety, I told him, as

clearly as I could remember, the circumstances of this very simple affair: how that, the horses being startled, the leaders began to caper and the postilions to look uneasy; but that three or four bumpkins having rushed forward and laid hold of the horses' heads and soothed them, the royal carriage proceeded, and was out of sight in a moment.

"And this happened close to the gravel-pits, did it not?"

"Well," said I, "there certainly were some pits about half a mile off, out of which the contractors got their ballast."

"Did the king do or say any thing?"

"Nothing that I can vouch for, except to tell the postilions to go on."

"And the mob cheered, did they not?"

"I fancied I heard some two or three huzzas, certainly."

"That will do, my dear fellow. This little bit of 'fat' will afford us a mutton-chop and a pot of 'heavy,' so order them at the bar."

Wondering what could possibly be made out of my bare morsel of information, I bespoke the viands, and while they were preparing Conroy was writing away with vigour. My wonder the next morning was chequered with amusement and admiration, when in all the papers, conspicuously, in large type, leaded, with DOUBLE CAPS heading, appeared:

### **"MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF ROYALTY.**

*"After the interesting proceedings of the day were*

concluded, an event occurred which, but for the seasonable interposition of Divine Providence, might have put the whole nation in mourning, and possibly plunged all Europe in grief. Just as the royal *cortège* had reached the cross-road leading to the Castle, an infuriated sheep suddenly rushed from the lane, and dashing under the feet of the high-mettled steeds, set them plunging and kicking with fearful impetuosity. The alarmed postilions in vain endeavoured to restrain their frantic excitement; the leaders had turned their heads towards a chain of pits which had been excavated to a fearful depth, in order to furnish ballast for the earthworks of the bridge; the animals were preparing to start madly off in that perilous direction, when the imminent danger to majesty was in an instant comprehended by the alarmed and loyal crowd which had congregated at the spot, anxious to catch a glimpse of their beloved and popular monarch. A dozen brawny arms seizing the steeds, fortunately succeeded in turning their heads from the direction of certain destruction and calming the terror of the royal team. Our "sailor king," unmoved by the sudden danger, never even for a moment lost that coolness which is one of his most distinguishing characteristics, and which doubtless would be displayed in the same matchless manner were he, Nelson-like, to be called upon to lead the British fleet against the country's most puissant foe. Putting his head out at the window, the king quietly nodded his thanks, and calmly called to the coachman to 'Go on.' The carriage was soon in motion, and amidst the deafening shouts of a loyal people, the *cortège* resumed its route,

and reached Windsor Castle in safety. Had it not been for prompt and effectual succour at this unexpected emergency, the consequences might have been fearful to contemplate. Reform might have lost her most glorious champion; the nation might have had to mourn the sudden bereavement of its most popular sovereign; and Europe, in its still unsettled state, might have very soon seen serious and momentous changes in her political relations. But the danger was happily averted by the loyal promptitude of the people; and another proof has been added—if proof were wanting—that a king who reigns in the hearts of his subjects is far more secure than if environed by a standing army.”

I cut out the paragraph to keep as a curiosity; I give it *verbatim*. The lesson it conveyed was not lost on me in my after career as a “casual contributor.”

But if the “liners” sometimes imposed on the papers, they had to guard against imposition on the other side. This I early found out, especially in one instance—that of the *Sunday Monitor*, which always made a special feature of some leading occurrence of the week. A violent storm had burst over the metropolis, and a notice was given to the various “casuals” that for every paragraph of information used half-a-guinea would be paid. My contribution amounted only to the particulars of a man killed by lightning as he was pumping; and in the report I stated, as a remarkable feature of the occurrence, that, though no *external mark of injury* appeared, yet “three buttons” *on the man’s waistcoat* were fused by the fluid.

I looked at the paper the next pay-day, and found that all the information sent by "casuals" to the office had been thrown into the form of a narrative, to give it the appearance of having been collected by one of the regular staff. My little bit of disastrous electricity was there, but evidently re-written, with the design to disguise it. I presented my bill to the editor; he shook his head, and remarked that nothing was down to me, the whole of the matter having been furnished by their own reporter.

"That is my paragraph, nevertheless," said I, pointing to the deceased pumper, "and not your reporter's, who has evidently taken the fact from the copy I furnished."

"Why," said he, "you don't mean to say you imposed upon us a fictitious account?"

"No; the man was actually killed by lightning while pumping."

"Well," said he, "and would not such an incident be generally known?"

"Yes," said I; "but in order, should there be any doubt, that I might identify *my* body in the *Sunday Monitor*, I took the precaution to melt three of his buttons."

"Oh, oh! I understand," said the editor, with a half-smile.

He signed my bill without another word, and I became afterwards rather a favoured contributor to the paper.

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## CHAPTER VI.

## MY DÉBUT IN "HIGH LIFE."

A FEW months before making my bow at Marlborough-Street Police-Court, I did duty at the Mansion House for Mr. Thomas Haynes, then one of the almost extinct class of old reporters termed "penny-a-liners," who, by his learning and general acquirements, materially helped to make the press what it is in power and influence, and who assisted perhaps quite as much as fine writers to make it respected and respectable.

Mr. T. Haynes — of whom more anon — being taken ill, I consented to fill his post temporarily. It was just when the Reform mania was at its zenith. Sir John Key, for the second time Lord Mayor, was then at the very height of his popularity. He was a very good-natured man; and that quality shall be permitted, like charity, to cover a multitude of sins.

I had given the Mansion House the benefit of my presence for about a week, — during which period I contrived to cook up a case or two in the comic fashion, which, though I hesitated to rank them as "first-rate," I secretly felt persuaded the correctly-judging public was, in that matter, directly at issue with me, — when the Lord Mayor, after a few complimentary phrases about the ability with which I had discharged my vicarious duties, said, "You'll dine with us on Thursday, I hope. It's a reception-day. My secretary shall send you a card." I bowed acquiescence, and accord-

ingly, in the evening, I was gratified at receiving an elegant envelope, enclosing an embossed card, which contained the following invite :

"The LORD MAYOR and LADY MAYORESS request the honour of Mr. POTT's company to dinner on Thursday, at seven o'clock, to meet her MAJESTY'S MINISTERS."

A luminous thought or two flashed instantly across my mind. I must here premise that at that somewhat juvenile period of my life I fear there was a shade or so—not more—of something tolerably *green* in my composition. What! thought I, as I read over the words on the invitation-card, to meet "her Majesty's Ministers"! Could the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayor-ess have got up this little party expressly on my account? Were they really anxious for this introduction to take place? The idea was rather too flattering. I felt, however, that the "meeting" would be delightful on my side; I hoped somehow to make the delight mutual. Parliamentary Reform was the current topic of the day in political circles; the "comic cases" at the Mansion House were, not unlikely, the topics in all other circles. I should, in a *tête-à-tête* with Russell, Grey, Graham, Stanley, or some one of "her Majesty's Ministers," have an opportunity of expressing my admiration of the Reform Bill; and I might then contrive to elicit perhaps an equally favourable opinion as to the Mansion-House mimicries. I should certainly *express unbounded* pleasure at being introduced to the *immortal authors* of the "Reform Bill"—the authors

of the Reform Bill might be gratified to make the acquaintance of the writer of "The Conscientious Chummy," "The Grand Bobbery between Higgs and Griggs," and some other trifles of mine that had set all the world laughing, or at least ought to have done so.

Great men in past ages had befriended modest genius. I ventured to hope that some proof of this noble feeling not being quite extinct in modern times would take place on Thursday. Who knows?

My principal care was as to dress. My wardrobe was not then completely adapted to Court gaieties; a suit of decent black and a satin stock were all I could venture to promise "her Majesty's Ministers." Black-silk stockings, though no doubt the "cheese," were an extravagance not to be thought of; but I considered that unsullied white cotton, with well-fitting pumps, would perhaps draw attention to a neat foot, of which I might have justly been proud; but being entirely without personal vanity on this as well as on all other matters, I used merely to smile when my shoemaker complimented me on having quite the model foot of the parish.

One piece of strictly appropriate display I resolved to have; it was a large topaz brooch, set round with pearls, which my landlady's daughter had given me an opportunity of closely admiring one Sunday evening, when, finding that we were the only occupants of the house, the considerate creature knocked at my door *to ask if I felt lonely*, and if she should lend me a *volume of Doctor somebody's sermons*.

The hint I dropped about the brooch was immediately taken, and the good-natured lass with her own chubby fingers put in a couple of stitches to secure it more firmly, as its dimensions and weight, being certainly rather more formidable than I had anticipated, required some such safeguard.

Suppose me full figged for the "meeting," and that I had taken a parting peep in the looking-glass, the prominent reflections on both sides being that there were conspicuously visible Queen Elizabeth's well-known "letter of recommendation" and the topaz brooch.

I made my way, at half-past seven, to the private door of the Mansion House, and with a modest rat-tat was at once admitted. There was nothing to discompose the most timid when the door was thrown open; so I entered, and at once proceeded to divest myself of clogs and cloak. One of the powdered and liveried fraternity, who was lounging about in an indolent pick-tooth kind of way, blandly inquired my name, to which I as blandly responded—we will say—"Jonathan Potts." With the voice of a Stentor, the insidious rascal made the name resound through the building. Another Stentor on the first landing caught up the name; it was again echoed by a third, and a burst of music from a brass band—a bar or two of "See the Conquering Hero," I suppose—immediately followed.

I was a little discomposed at this sudden notoriety, and could have wished for a reception of a quieter character, especially when the Lord Mayor's jockey—in hunting cap and boots, making the professional salaam

—came forward to precede me as I made my way up-stairs. At the first landing the two City Marshals, doffing their plumed cocked hats, heralded me while I mounted the second flight. I could have well dispensed with some of this state; but thinking it had been pre-arranged by my kind entertainers for the “honoured guest,” I followed the marshals, who marched in the van with imperturbable gravity, until I came in sight of the hall of entrance. What to do with my clogs and cloak was a little puzzling; but, making a virtue of necessity, I thrust them boldly into the hands of one of the gorgeously gold-laced state footmen, who received them with an air of ineffable disgust and deeply-offended dignity.

I gained a moment to draw on my kids; and being at last, in my estimation, quite *comme il faut*, I passed between the bowing and covertly-grinning marshals into the room. In a moment my eyes were dazzled with the sudden splendour and the brilliancy of the scene. A double lane of Court *habitués*, densely packed together, led up to what appeared to be a gilded sofa throne, on which sat a stout lady—I conjectured she was the Lady Mayoress—receiving the compliments of a big, burly personage, whom I recognised at once, by his star, blue ribbon, black-velvet skull-cap, and hearty haw-haw, to be his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. On all sides might be seen diamonds sparkling, feathers waving, Windsor uniforms glancing; and unlucky I in the midst, walking gingerly up the avenue of *notabilities*, who cast furtive glances—I am afraid *not of admiration*—at the smirking eruption from Cock-

neydom in plain clothes, who had for a moment monopolised the attention of the aristocratic assembly. Up to this point my confidence—audacity, if you had rather—had not deserted me. But now my courage fairly oozed out. I saw I had made some terrible mistake. I was in doubt what to do—whether to advance and pay kneeling homage to the Civic Queen, or to plunge desperately through the living barrier of plumes and uniforms, and hide my confusion in the background. At this moment the Lord Mayor caught my eye. He was a good-natured man, I have already said; and his behaviour on this occasion satisfied me that his character in this respect was not undeserved, for he came down the avenue immediately, took me by the arm, and, as if whispering a State secret, said :

"I can't present you to the Lady Mayoress, as you are not in Court costume; but I shall be happy to introduce you when you take your coffee in the private drawing-room."

"The fact is," I muttered, "your people made a mistake, I suppose, in announcing me."

"Well, well, never mind about it. Come this way."

Then, courteously but peremptorily pushing between the company, he placed me at the back of the crowd, and left me, that he might receive some genuine grandees who were announced.

I was unreservedly glad at this solution of my fiasco; in the fulness of my exultation, I tapped a red-coated individual on the shoulder, and, addressing him as "*noble captain*," jocosely requested him to charge

as if at the head of his troop on the opposing company, so as to make an opening for me into the ante-room; promising that, when I was at the head of the War Department, his claim to promotion should not be overlooked. The individual thus familiarly addressed, rather short, square-built, and farmer-featured,—I afterwards found out he was General Lord Hill,—with military urbanity made way; and I soon found myself in the ante-room, where the *οἱ πολλοί* of the guests—the “gentlemen of the press”—were making their remarks and notes on the company.

The first familiar face I encountered was that of Mr. Wight.

“What!” said he, with no very complimentary stare, “are you the ‘Jonathan Potts’ announced just now? the white-cotton-stockinged, ‘d’ye-see-my-grand-mother’s-brooch’ Potts, eh? My dear fellow, don’t *show* more than you can help, otherwise you’ll stand a chance of being hanged for killing half the company with laughter.”

Rather mortified at this summary condemnation of my personal appearance, I contrived secretly to pocket the brooch; and dinner being announced, I followed into the Egyptian Hall, and boldly placed myself between an alderman in furred robes and a starched and stately personage in Court suit, immense *queue*, and inconveniently-conspicuous sword.

By this time my *château d’Espagne*—that is, if it ever existed—relative to the pleasant possibilities to *ensue* from “meeting her Majesty’s Ministers” had *resolved into thin air*. I resumed my equanimity, and

determined to devote myself to the unrestricted enjoyment of a first introduction to unlimited eleemosynary turtle and champagne. Conversation, I saw, was wholly out of the question. My aldermanic neighbour was too busy gallanting a very pretty lady on his left; and my aristocratic neighbour was seemingly too full of lordly contempt for the scene and the viands,—so, at least, I judged by his putting down the gold spoon with a rueful look after the first mouthful of turtle,—and too elevated in station, for any thing approaching a little friendly dinner-digesting chit-chat.

Dinner—to which I did ample justice—being over, the ceremony of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress drinking to their guests in the “loving cup” commenced. I was watching the coming cup with some curiosity, when I felt my elbow nudged, and, on looking round, saw that my noble neighbour had turned himself round towards me, and, with an air of more humility than I thought it was possible for such a high personage to exhibit, “humbly begged my pardon; but would I be kind enough just to put him up to the dodge of the ‘loving cup,’ as he had never been at a public dinner before? I am the publisher of the *Mark-Lane Record*,” said he.

“What!” replied I, “a newspaper-publisher? Why, I took you for a lord-in-waiting at least.”

“Ha! well! perhaps I may *look* the character tolerably well; but I wish the costume at the d——. I’ve been fool enough to pay two guineas to Nathan for a Court-dress, and have been in purgatory all the time *I’ve had it on*. The infernal bag behind catches the

collar of my coat, so that I can't move right or left without turning my whole body; if I bend my head forward in the least, I'm afraid it will pull off my wig; and I'm sure to catch cold in my calves. You've been tucking in gloriously, while I've hardly tasted a morsel —only one spoonful of turtle, and part of that spilt over my waistcoat, which I expect I shall have to get cleaned, or perhaps have to pay for altogether; and as for the champagne, I ain't quick enough to collar the bottle."

"At all events," rejoined I, with a supremely patronising air, "you sha'n't want for champagne now. Here, waiter," says I briskly, seizing hold of one of the Lord Mayor's footmen as I imagined, "bring us some champagne."

A withering look from the individual I had imprisoned, a significant glance at his sword, as I thought, convinced me of the terrible blunder I had committed.

When the offended party had passed on, the alarmed publisher whispered:

"Why, that's Lord ——, his Majesty's Master of the Horse."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### SINGULAR ROBBERY AT THE TRAVELLERS' CLUB.

SAM WHITE, THE SWEEP.

*THE first case of real importance that came under my notice was a robbery at the Travellers' Club. Six large silver candlesticks, valued at 300l., were stolen*

one morning from the dining-hall in a most mysterious way. They were safe the previous night, as deposed to by the steward; they were safe at six the next morning, as vouched for by the hall-porter; and they had disappeared by eight o'clock, when the head-waiter proceeded, as part of his morning duty, to give out the plate for cleaning. The Duke of Wellington, I recollect, came to the police-court with the steward, secretary, and some of the committee, to seek the advice of Sir F. Roe and Mr. Dyer as to the best mode of recovering the property and detecting the robber. Plank, Clements, Goddard, and Schofield were the officers called into the private room.

The only evidence that could be extracted, after a long examination of night and hall porters, was, that a sweep had called about six o'clock to sweep the dining-room chimney; that he was not permitted to perform the job, as the steward had left no orders; that he went away to speak to his master, who, he said, contracted to sweep the club chimneys, and returned in about half an hour to take away his "kit," which he had been allowed to leave in the hall—he having, according to his explanation, called at the wrong club. As the parties interested in this affair—members of the club—were among the highest in the land, of course it became a point with the magistrates to assist the "Travellers" in the recovery of their candlesticks and the capture of the culprit. Three of the sharpest officers were immediately put on this business—Goddard, Clements, and Schofield. The trio adjourned to the *back of the office*, and called the hall-porter into council.

"Was the sweep thick-set and boss-eyed?"

"That answered his description."

"Did he bring a soot-bag apparently half-full of soot with him?"

"He did."

"And did he ask to leave the bag in the hall?"

"He did."

"This bag he fetched away soon afterwards?"

"He did."

The three officers consulted for a moment.

"Sam White and his youngest kid," said Clements. The other two nodded. "The 'swag' will most likely be at Mo Jacobs' or Ikey Solomons'" (two of the most noted "fences," then living at the East End of the town). "You two look after that lot; and I'll see if I can pick up Sam."

The officers, being furnished with proper warrants, were soon on the scent. Before the morning had waned, they had four of the candlesticks at the court, ere time had been given to clean them from the wax-droppings of the previous night, and the other two were shortly afterwards stopped *in transitu* to the Barbican melting-pot, kept at proper heat night and day for the accommodation of the dealers in what was then known as "white soup,"—which, translated into vernacular, meant "melted silver."

The capture of the thief proved not quite so easy an affair. I had the particulars from Clements himself. His first visit was to a harridan in Duck Lane, *where "Sam" at one time lodged*. It cost him three *half-pints of neat gin* before he could induce her to say

a word. But the potency of the gin mollified her crusty temper so far that the officer contrived to extract from her, bit by bit, that White had given up "business" at that end of the town for some time; had eloped with the favourite sultana of a rival sweep; had taken his youngest boy with him, and had gone to live in Wentworth Street, Whitechapel, then, and for some years afterwards, a perfect den of burglars, thieves, and the lowest description of loose women. Of this locality, and especially of George Yard, which abutted on it, and the White Horse public-house, the head-quarters of the "cracksmen," I shall have something to say in due season.

As Wentworth Street was known to the officers to be tenanted with desperate characters, who would no more mind beating out the brains or cutting the throats of all the Bow-Street runners in London, if they had a chance, than they would of swallowing a glass of grog, it was thought advisable—as the service was unquestionably one of possible personal danger, not only from the district in which the capture was to be made, but from the determined character of the powerful ruffian who was to be taken—to obtain the assistance of three of the Lambeth-Street officers, whose persons were known to the Wentworth-Street gang, and who knew the Wentworth-Street gang individually. To these six officers, well armed with pistol and cutlass, was added a seventh, a volunteer, who frequently, *en amateur*, made his appearance at the police-court to fraternise with the officers. This volunteer was named *Maestry*, a six-feet-four semi-witted Anglo-Italian,

who filled the post of private footman to the old Duchess of Richmond. His services, at his urgent request, were accepted; he was furnished with a cutlass, which he was, like the others, required to wear beneath his long frock-coat.

The whole party, according to arrangement, met at Wentworth Street, and dividing themselves into two sections, one entered the street by Whitechapel, the other, consisting of the Lambeth-Street officers and Maestry, at the other extremity. The first party had not proceeded more than half-way down the street when they saw White and his little boy coming along. White no sooner caught sight of the West-End officers, whom he knew, than, rightly conjecturing they did not come there on a mere chance visit, he suddenly turned tail and ran up the street; but only to be caught in the arms of the Lambeth-Street officers, who instantly threw him down, and, before he could make any effectual resistance, had a pair of handcuffs securely snapped on his wrists. The caption might have been thus cleverly concluded with no more trouble or danger, had it not been for a piece of unlooked-for absurdity on the part of Maestry. While the officers were securing White, Maestry took it into his head to exhibit a little piece of personal importance on his own account. He drew his cutlass and flourished it about, walking behind the officers as they were forcing the but half-subdued ruffian towards a *hackney-coach*, which had been stationed in readiness in Whitechapel. I have said that Maestry was *gaunt-looking* and preposterously tall. By way of

bravado or practical joke, he pretended to make a cut with his "lash" at a woman who was looking out of a window at least twenty feet above him. The woman, in real or pretended alarm, drew in her head so suddenly that her bonnet fell off into the street. Instantly a yell was raised on all sides that a woman's head had been cut off by one of the officers. The whole street was alive in a twinkling. Bricks, stones, pokers, all kinds of weapons and missiles, were brought into requisition. Hundreds of half-drunken, ferocious wretches hemmed in the officers, several of whom were seriously maltreated; and the officers, in self-defence, were obliged to knock down their assailants right and left with their heavy, brass-headed staves. Had the attack not fortunately commenced when they were nearly at the top of the street, it is doubtful whether the prisoner would not have been rescued, and some of the officers either maimed or murdered. Finding the matter becoming rather "too hot" to be pleasant, the officers went to work in earnest. The strong ruffian White made prodigious efforts to free himself from the handcuffs, dashing his manacled hands with such fury and force at the officers as to send them on their knees repeatedly. He was quieted for a time by a heavy blow sheer on the temple, which gave his captors an opportunity of dragging him to a hackney-coach, and securing him therein before he recovered his senses. The coach drove away, and the other officers made their escape from the mob, but not without severe bruises and injuries; Maestry, who caused *the mischief*, coming off with the loss of a couple of

teeth, a gash from a brick on one cheek, and the bone of one of his shins laid bare for six inches.

Of the special career of this White, perhaps nothing more may be said than that this Travellers' job effectually put a stop to it. As the officers cleverly surmised, White had gained admittance to the club by his old dodge of pretending that he had been sent to sweep the chimneys. He had concealed his boy in the sack which he was permitted to leave in the hall while he went back, as he said, to make further inquiry. The boy, who had been thoroughly well tutored, and who knew, from information no doubt obtained through a confederate in the service of the club, where the property was to be found, watched his opportunity, got out of the sack, and substituted the candlesticks. As the property was too heavy for him to carry off, he let himself out by the hall-door unperceived; and no suspicion was excited when White came back with his excuse, and took away the sack he had left.

It need only to be stated that White was tried, convicted, and transported for life.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

THE late gaoler Wilks was one day furnished with *a warrant to apprehend a farmer named Polson, in the north of England, for horse-stealing.* The case

was a remarkable one. Two brothers, one living in the west and the other in the north of England, each occupying land, and by their neighbours regarded as substantial farmers, were, in reality, as it came out in evidence afterwards, two of the largest horse-stealers in the kingdom.

Their plan was to send horses stolen in the north to the farm in the west of England, and horses stolen in the west to the farm in Yorkshire. The stolen horses were disposed of at various fairs; and as the owners never thought of travelling three or four hundred miles to look after missing property, the brothers carried on their felonious trade with impunity, and made a great deal of money at it.

In consequence of information brought to Marlborough-Street Police-Court, a warrant was issued by Sir George Farrant to apprehend Thomas Polson, who occupied a farm called, I think, the "Gravel Pits," in the vicinity of Exeter, for horse-stealing. When Wilks reached Exeter, the assizes were on. Thinking it the best place to make inquiries about the person he was in quest of, he went to the town-hall where the judges were sitting, with a view of having some conversation with the city authorities, and getting the help of the local constabulary. When Wilks entered the court, a trial for murder was just going on. From the evidence it appeared that a respectable farmer from the north, on a visit to his brother, while sitting in the kitchen, was shot dead by some person outside, who had fired through the window, and had killed him instantly. *The murdered man had been found lying dead in the*

kitchen by one of the farm-servants who heard the report, but who thought that some one was out rook-shooting, and therefore took no immediate notice of the circumstance.

The brother of the murdered man, a wealthy farmer, had left early in the morning to attend, as he said, the Taunton Market, and was riding along the road on his return with a neighbour a few minutes after the shot was fired. Both these persons saw a sweep running from the farm across a paddock which led to the high road—the said sweep being one of the well-known country tramps, who went round the country looking for jobs, and who bore a very bad character.

As soon as the murder was discovered, the brother mentioned the circumstance of seeing the sweep crossing the paddock. Instant search after him was made, and in an hour or two he was taken in a beer-shop, about ten miles from the scene of the murder. On examining his kit, a pistol recently discharged and a quantity of powder were found. In addition to these suspicious matters, a pair of shoes, stolen from the farm, and belonging to the murdered man, was found in his bag. This was considered conclusive. In vain the fellow protested his innocence of the murder, accounting for the appearance of the pistol and powder by declaring that he used both in the way of his trade, and that he had just before cleared a flue, too narrow to be climbed, by firing the pistol up the vent—which proved to be a fact.

*There were, however, the shoes, which incontestably*

bly showed that he must have been at or near the farm when the shot was fired. The miserable wretch admitted that he was at the farm ; that, seeing the shoes in the kitchen, and the farmer's brother asleep with his head resting on the table, he did not wake him, but possessed himself of the shoes, thinking he could steal them without fear of detection. He further declared that he heard a shot fired, and that on looking round he saw a man in a long white coat and billycock hat, armed with a gun, jump over the fence and disappear. Of course this last portion of his story was entirely discredited, and was set down to the prisoner's invention, in order that he might make out a plausible defence. This was a rough outline of the case.

Wilks paid great attention to the course of the evidence, and particularly to the chief witness when called into the box ; for, to his great astonishment, he found, from the name and description, it was the very person whom he had come from London to apprehend. The farmer Polson gave his testimony with great minuteness. He detailed the circumstance of leaving early in the morning for Taunton Market, and his having requested his brother to keep at home to make out an account against him, for the purpose of settlement. He minutely described the position of his brother's body after being shot ; from which it would appear, that the murdered man was either lying with his head on his hands on the table, or that he was *leaning his head on one of his hands, resting his elbow on the table, the hand being perforated by the ball,*

which lodged in the brain. The kitchen-window looked into the straw-yard, and the murderer must have crept up to the window and fired through it.

The flight of the sweep, and the finding the pistol and powder and stolen shoes in his possession, were brought forward as circumstantial evidence of the murder. The prisoner had only his simple denial to set against the presumptive proofs of guilt; and after the summing-up of the judge, the jury returned a verdict of guilty. The prisoner was removed from the bar, loudly protesting his innocence; and the witnesses were about to leave the court, when Wilks, desirous of having the warrant backed by a county magistrate,—then a necessary form,—got a local constable to introduce him to one of the magistrates who was in court, to whom he made his business known, and who, with some reluctance, backed the warrant. By this time Polson had left the court, and had gone towards his farm.

The county magistrate, jealous, perhaps, of country magisterial privileges, insisted that the county constables should accompany Wilks, and take Polson into custody. The party proceeded to Gravel Pits, and there they learned that Polson had just arrived. Wilks proposed to go into the house at once, and take the prisoner. This the magistrate would by no means allow. He told one of the county constables to take the warrant, enter the house, and bring Polson out. The constable did as directed, Wilks and the other constables remaining outside and keeping a sharp look-out back and front. *The constable who had the warrant to execute being longer than was considered necessary, the*

magistrate consented that the other constables and Wilks should enter the house and see what had caused the delay. When they made their way into the house, they could find no one. They proceeded up-stairs, and there a singular sight met their eyes. The flooring of the room for half the distance was so constructed as to hang upon hinges; it let down like a trap-door, and on the part that remained fixed in its place was perched the constable, who gave the following account of the escape of the prisoner.

As soon as he made his business known, Polson, without any appearance of alarm, begged he would come up-stairs and let him change his boots. The constable complied. They went up-stairs, and while Polson, as he thought, was changing his boots, the floor suddenly gave way, and Polson disappeared. It was soon ascertained that this trap-door, contrived purposely, in case of need, to aid escape, led to a lower room; that from this room access was gained to a tunnel which extended to the other side of the Gravel Pits; that immediate pursuit was hopeless, for it would take the mounted constables at least a quarter of an hour to ride round to the place from which Polson had made his escape on horseback. This mode of escape was subsequently ascertained from the appearance of the ground and the marks of horse's feet.

It was evident the bird had flown, and now it was thought expedient to search the farm-house thoroughly. Papers and letters were discovered which showed the kind of traffic carried on between Polson and his brother. *In particular, some angry letters were found from the*

murdered man to Polson, in which he roundly charged his brother with cheating him, and insisting on the account between them being settled at once. There was a copy of the answer to these letters from Polson, inviting his brother to come to him from Yorkshire, and then all was to be made square and right between them.

It was now resolved to make more minute search, as a horrible suspicion was raised by these letters. After much trouble, the constables contrived to turn over a large dung-heap in the rear of the kitchen. Here they found a gun, white top-coat, and a billy-cock hat. The belief that Polson was the murderer now strengthened into certainty. A more careful examination of the dead body was made. It was ascertained that a gun-shot, and not a pistol-shot, was the cause of death. What ought to have been done at first was done now. The bullet, taken from the skull of the murdered man, was tried, and found too big for the pistol of the sweep: it fitted the gun, and, what was more remarkable, a portion of the burnt wadding was found to be part of a letter with Polson's name on it. Of course the new circumstances were communicated to the judges who tried the case, and a respite was immediately granted to the sweep, who had been left for execution on the following Monday.

The constables, with Wilks, then set off after Polson, having a pretty good clue to his whereabouts from the letters found at the Gravel Pits. They went down to Yorkshire, and actually succeeded in taking Polson at his brother's farm, where he had gone expecting to

remain in safety until the time came to turn every thing into money, and then to leave the kingdom.

Polson was brought back to Exeter, tried at the next assizes, found guilty, and hanged.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MYSTERIOUS MULATTO.

ONE of the most renowned police-officers—and well he deserved his reputation—was Plank, the head of the Marlborough-Street staff. Originally a barber, his genius soon led him to discover that he had mistaken his vocation; and, having succeeded in procuring an appointment in the Bow-Street Patrol,—the “Red-Breasts,” as they were then termed,—his abilities were speedily recognised, and he soon found himself transferred to the better-paid and more regular duties of police-officer attached to the Marlborough-Street Police-Court, where for years he continued one of its most distinguished characters.

During the many years in which he was actively employed, he had what is termed a run of “best business.” Every case requiring tact, delicacy, and experience was confided to him, either to pursue the inquiry and arrest the offender himself, or to select the officer best fitted to perform the required duties. His life, if written, would furnish a remarkable history. He was, however, from principle, rather taciturn on the subject of the high-life cases in which he had been employed, very much to his ultimate profit. His re-

mark was, "He should only make 'wild work' among great families if he were to tell all he knew." Though resolute in action, and of wiry make, he was unfit, from rather diminutive physical organisation, for dealing alone with cases which required animal strength and downright hand-to-hand personal work. Having received the appointment of chief officer, his shrewdness, ready resources, and experience rendered him deservedly a favourite with each succeeding magistrate and with all his brother-officers.

Before the new police was established, Plank was omnipotent at the police-court; and an officer would much rather have fallen under the censure of the magistrates than have incurred his displeasure. Many are yet alive who can recollect the sharp visage, the active movements, and especially the rapid mode of utterance, in which he issued his instructions to his subordinates. No sooner was the magistrate's private door thrown half open, and an iron-gray head quickly thrust out,—its aquiline nose surmounted by large silver-mounted spectacles, over which a pair of piercing eyes peered with a peculiarly penetrating and sagacious look,—than every officer was on the alert, well knowing that something important was in the wind. The name of an officer being sharply pronounced, that officer instantly followed into the private room, and in a few minutes was packing up his traps on a mission either of danger or of importance. Two or three anecdotes will, perhaps, serve to give an idea of the high estimation in which *his abilities were held*, and of his incorruptibility in *office*. *He has often told me that, had he taken a*

tenth part of the bribes offered to him to wink at the escape of some wealthy or titled culprit, he might have retired, twenty years before he was superannuated on a retiring pension, with a handsome fortune.

One well-authenticated instance may serve to corroborate this statement. Plank was the officer selected to arrest Fauntleroy, the banker forger. Fauntleroy was a private friend of the magistrates; and when the charge against him was made *ex parte*, his character stood so high, that little or no faith was placed on the evidence, on which, however, the magistrates could not do otherwise than issue their warrant.

Plank went to the banking-house in Berners Street, and in as delicate a way as possible intimated to Fauntleroy that he must convey him in custody to the police-court, on a charge of forgery. The banker showed no appearance of dismay at this announcement, but expressed at once his readiness to go with the officer to the court. They walked there arm in arm, conversing in the most open manner, Fauntleroy giving his own explanation of the affair, and evidently wishing to impress on the officer that the charge was a malicious and unfounded invention. As the day business had terminated, and the evening sittings—there were evening sittings then—did not come on till eight o'clock, the banker was not placed in the criminal cell, but shown into Mr. Conant's drawing-room, where he conversed very much at his ease until the hour for examination came on. Some evidence was then tendered, *but not of a conclusive nature*; consequently the magis-

trate remanded the case, taking large bail for the banker's future appearance.

Previous to the day fixed for the reëxamination, a series of documents was discovered, which left no doubt of the guilt of the accused, and of the premeditated and extensive character of his delinquencies. A careful watch had been kept on the banker's movements; but no indications of any attempt to evade justice could be detected. When on their way again to the police-court, an offer of 1000*l.* down was made to Plank to take his prisoner round by Blenheim Street, where, it afterwards came out, a post-chaise was stationed, with a number of resolute fellows, who, after a sham attack in order to save appearances, were to overpower the officer, and to effect the rescue.

"The sum," said Plank, "staggered me for a moment. It was a great temptation to a poor man; but I made up my mind to resist it, and only tightened my hold on the arm of the banker, at the same time giving the 'office' to a couple of disguised constables, who were, by my directions, following at a distance, to keep a sharp look-out. I got him to the court safely, and he never was out of custody until he swung at the Old Bailey."

Another case, in which his adroitness came out in full lustre, is the following :

Some years ago, at the usual fashionable hour, a tall, slim mulatto, dressed in the highest style of fashion, remarkable for a profuse display of costly jewelry, a *white cravat* tied with a faultless precision that even *Brummell* might envy, and with large misshapen feet

pinched into pumps at least two sizes too small, giving him the gait of a man walking on eggs, might be seen in Bond Street daily. No one knew who he was, or from what source he derived the means of making such a conspicuous display. It was, however, rumoured he was some wealthy West-India planter, who had come over on the then active business of West-India Negro Emancipation. He was sometimes seen with a young, captivating Englishwoman, dressed with equal splendour.

"I used to meet him regularly," said Plank, "when office-hours were over; and after two or three meetings of this sort, I felt pretty sure he was a 'macar,' and got his living on the 'cross.' I resolved to get to the bottom of the mystery, and I very soon did so. This was the dodge: His wife used to throw herself in the way of elderly noblemen and steady-going Members of Parliament; and her pretty face, beautiful foot, and young-married-woman look, soon made them desirous of a more intimate acquaintance. When first accosted, she would pretend to be highly indignant, show her wedding-ring, and declare she was the wife of a captain in the navy, who had been abroad twelve months, and was expected home with his ship daily. Those old fools who had a *penchant* for a little quiet flirtation with another's man's wife fell into the trap, and, after a few meetings, would prevail on her to let them visit her. She lived in King Street, in handsome lodgings. The visitor would make a sober call at night; and then, while in the midst of a little innocent chat, the captain in the navy—who was our swell acquaintance,

the mulatto—would burst into the room, knock about the candlesticks and fire-irons, break the looking-glasses, tear his wool, and perform all the antics of a deeply-injured, frantic husband. A threat of an action for *crim. con.*, or the production of a pair of pistols for satisfaction over the table, would generally lead to a parley; and there is no telling what sums were extorted this way.

“I remember, on one occasion, having to get back from the lady a packet of despatches which a Cabinet Minister had lost out of his pocket, he having been waylaid on his way from the Foreign Office, and ‘trapped’ by the lady in the usual style; and as he could not make his grand speech on foreign affairs in the House until he had the papers again, he came to me, told me the circumstances, and, after a deal of trouble, I got them back for 100*l*.

“One morning a staid country gentleman—a county magistrate and county member—had a long interview with Sir F. Roe. The magistrate called me in.

“‘Tell my officer your story,’ said the magistrate, ‘and I have no doubt he will get you out of the scrape.’

“The old gentleman then proceeded to state his case. He had been caught by the leers of this pretty lady; had been persuaded to pay her a visit in order to read the postscript of her husband’s last letter; and while just beginning a pleasant *tête-à-tête*, the door was flung open, and the infuriated mulatto made his appearance,—*in short*, the old scene over again. The old gentleman had been obliged to part with his gold

watch, his ready cash, and to borrow 50*l.* from a friend, before the injured husband would be mollified. He had submitted to the robbery, hoping it would end this rather delicate affair, prevent it from getting wind, and especially from coming to the ears of his wife and family, he having grown-up sons and daughters. But he was wonderfully mistaken. In about a week afterwards, as he was quietly preparing to take a flight into the country, on coming through the hall he saw a veiled figure, who asked him for a few minutes' conversation. To his alarm and indignation, the lady proved to be the mulatto's wife. She made up a pitiful tale of the unhappy life she had lived ever since the adventure in King Street—of her husband's jealous conduct and unkind treatment; hinted that he was waiting outside to expose both of them unless she brought back 100*l.* The money was given to her, and the old gentleman had a respite from annoyance for a week or two. Other applications were then made, again complied with, again renewed, until there seemed to be no end of the persecution and the payments. After having paid in this way upwards of 800*l.*, he resolved to put an end to the system of extortion, and accordingly took the determination to make his case known to the magistrate at the police-court.

“‘I am resolved to punish the black fellow,’ said the gentleman, ‘cost what it will. I don’t want to hurt his wife; for I really think she is foolish enough to entertain a slight—a very slight—regard for me, which her last letter, I think, sufficiently shows.’

“‘Any thing in the letter about being “content with

the humblest fare in the humblest cottage, if cheered with a visit from one who for the first time possesses, and ever will possess, the dearest affections of my woman's heart?"

"'Why, yes,' said the gentleman, looking a little foolish; 'certainly those words are in the letter. The magistrate, I suppose, told you what was in my letter?'"

"'Oh, no,' said I, opening a drawer, and taking out a handful of *billets-doux*; 'you are the sixth I know of to whom the lady has given her "dearest affections." Here are as many notes to six gentlemen—I won't tell names—word for word the same as your note.'

"'Bless me!' said the gentleman, half angry, half laughing; 'have I, at my time of life, been made such a fool of? Well, well, the thing must not go on, or get abroad. Can you manage the matter for me?'"

"'I think I can,' said I. 'Write a letter to the mulatto, which I will see properly delivered, telling the man—not the woman—that you have instructed your steward to arrange the business with him, and that he must meet you at eight o'clock to-morrow, on your way to the House.'

"The old gentleman did as directed, and I told Ballard to be in readiness to accompany me to the place of rendezvous. At the appointed time the old gentleman was in Cockspur Street. The mulatto met him, and after a few minutes' conversation they parted.

I then went up to the mulatto, saying I was Mr. —'s steward, and had some business to transact with a gentleman.

“‘Yes, yes; all right. I am dat gentleman. What you offer?’

“‘I must first satisfy myself that you are the right person. Can you show me any letter?’

“‘Oh, yes; here it is.’ The mulatto pulled out the letter he had received from the gentleman.

“‘This was just the evidence I required, and which in all the other cases had been wanting. In a second he found one arm taken hold of by his old acquaintance Ballard, and the other by me. The mulatto only grinned.

“‘Ah,’ said he, ‘I knows vot to do. I shall expose de villin dat rob my wife’s affections. I have just now tell him dat tousands on tousands sha’n’t prevent me to bring my action for *crim. con.*’

“‘Come, come,’ said I, ‘listen to reason. There’s evidence enough of conspiracy to “lag” you; but I don’t want to do you or your wife any harm, if you will give up this little game. Come into the British, and let us talk over the matter.’

“‘We went into the tavern; and after a good deal of hard bargaining I got him to sign a paper that, in consideration of receiving 100*l.* down, he would never more molest the old gentleman; and further, that his wife should never write or go near his residence again.

“‘This mode of settlement was so satisfactory to the old gentleman, that he not only paid the money immediately, but added a handsome present over and above my regular charge.”

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## CHAPTER X.

## A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

THE assistance of the police was one morning invoked at Vine-Street Station, Inspector Charles Baker being then on duty. The applicant was a jeweller in Regent Street, named Jones, and his story was as follows :

The previous week a gentleman, whose garments were of the most orthodox clerical cut, entered his shop, and having been informed, in reply to a question, that the Bishop of Salisbury and his family were customers, presented his card, on which was engraved, "The Rev. Hezekiah Poole, Incumbent of St. David's, Machynlleth, Wales." He had, he said, just been presented with the valuable gift of the mastership of the grammar school in his parish through the interest of his college friend, the Bishop of Salisbury ; and he wished to testify his gratitude by making a suitable present to each of the right reverend gentleman's four daughters. As the family dealt at this establishment, he had decided upon letting it have the benefit of his orders, because the proprietor, he considered, would be best able to inform him in what direction the taste of the young ladies laid. He explained his views so far as to let it be understood he desired the articles to be of the very best description, but that the whole cost of the four presents must not exceed 100*l.* or 120*l.*, for which he would pay cash *down*. As ladies were rather fanciful, especially in *matters of jewelry*, he would not venture to select on

his own taste and judgment alone, but would like a few articles of *bijouterie* to be sent to St. James's Square,—the bishop's town residence,—and then the young ladies, with himself, might form themselves into a committee of taste, and decide this momentous matter. The Rev. Hezekiah Poole further stated that the articles must be sent the next morning to St. James's Square at ten o'clock, at which hour he had an appointment with the bishop; and further, that punctuality was to be observed, as he had promised to "do duty" for a clerical brother at eleven o'clock the same day.

Mr. Jones adopted the precaution, after his customer had left, of sending to a clerical robemaker in Bond Street to inquire respecting Mr. Poole; and the answer was, that the reverend incumbent of St. David's was a man of high standing, of considerable wealth, and, whether he paid for or booked goods, a sale to any amount might be safely made to him.

Mr. Jones, being now quite satisfied, made a very choice selection of jewelry, put up the various articles in cases, and enclosed the whole in a small hand portmanteau. The value of the goods was between 600*l.* and 700*l.* The shopman was despatched to St. James's Square, so as to reach the bishop's house exactly at ten o'clock the next morning. The Rev. Hezekiah Poole, however, was even more punctual; he had just reached the house five minutes before, as the shopman was informed by the hall porter, and had been shown into the library until the bishop was at leisure to receive him. The shopman was asked to walk into a side room, and *in a minute or two* the Rev. Hezekiah Poole came to

him, and told him the young ladies were now in the drawing-room, and if he would wait a few minutes while he showed them the samples of jewelry they were to choose from, he would rejoin him, and settle the little account at once. The reverend gentleman then called in one of the footmen, and requested him to carry the portmanteau containing the jewelry into the drawing-room.

The shopman waited patiently until an hour had elapsed, when, finding that the Rev. Hezekiah Poole did not make his appearance, he went into the hall, and requested the porter to take a respectful message to the reverend gentleman, to the effect that, being expected in Regent Street, he could not wait much longer. The shopman was disagreeably surprised to learn from the porter that the reverend gentleman had left the bishop's residence about an hour back, taking with him the little portmanteau which the footman had been requested to carry to the drawing-room. He was perplexed at this information, and on requesting to see the young ladies, he was told they had not been in town for some months. This astonished him still more; and he then requested to see the footman to whom the portmanteau had been intrusted. The footman, when called, had nothing more to state than that, when he received the portmanteau and was taking it up-stairs, the reverend gentleman stopped him, told him he would not trouble him to take the portmanteau any farther; he would call another time to see the bishop. *Having given his card and received the portmanteau, he went through the hall into the square. The shop-*

man thought it advisable to seek an interview with the bishop. He was informed by his lord-ship that the Rev. Hezekiah Poole was personally unknown to him; that he had never benefited the Rev. H. Poole in any way that he could remember, certainly not in the way detailed, and that therefore the Rev. H. Poole was not very likely to wish to show his gratitude in the form of presents of jewelry to *four* young ladies, his daughters, as he happened to be blessed with only *two*.

The shopman went back to the jeweller with his strange story, and this induced Mr. Jones to make his way to the clerical tailor in Bond Street to ascertain some further particulars of his customer. The clerical tailor was equally astonished at what he was told; he admitted, however, that Mr. Poole was rather remarkable for eccentricity, but he had never heard that it had ever taken such a suspicious form before. Mr. Jones came away thoroughly puzzled; he thought, however, it would only be a proper precaution to go round to the various pawnbrokers and mention the circumstance, in case the eccentricity of Mr. Poole might lead him in that direction. To his dismay he found that the whole of the jewelry he had looked out with so much care was in the hands of three West-End pawnbrokers, having been pawned for about 200*l*. by a clerical-looking gentleman, who, from the description, could have been no other than his eccentric customer himself. This made the matter all the more mysterious, and the receipt in the evening of the following note *did not tend in the least to ease the doubts and con-*

jectures of Mr. Jones. The note was dated from Furnival's Hotel :

"MR. JONES,—Take no heed about your property ; it is quite safe, and will be returned to you in a very few days. A call of charity has necessitated the immediate raising of a sum of money, and I am sure I need not remind you to whom you really lend when you lend to the poor. I am going down to my rectory, and will certainly make good the whole of your property by the end of the week.

"HEZEKIAH POOLE, M.A."

The inspector, having heard the statement of Mr. Jones, suggested that an application should be made at once to the sitting magistrate at the police-court. Mr. Long, the magistrate, was ready to grant a warrant ; but in order to avoid unnecessary scandal, the offender being a beneficed clergyman, it was suggested that the officer who served the warrant should be accompanied by some one from Mr. Jones's shop, who should first hear what explanation Mr. Poole had to give of his strange conduct, when, perhaps, the execution of the warrant would be unnecessary. The warrant was immediately obtained on this understanding, and Inspector Baker and Police-Sergeant Gray, with the shopman of Mr. Jones, took the train, and very soon found themselves at Machynlleth, and at the rectory-house. It was arranged that the inspector should first have an interview, and, without disclosing his true character, mention *the business* he had come upon, and ask for an *explanation*.

In a few minutes the inspector rejoined his companions, and told them he had broached the subject to the reverend gentleman; but instead of offering any explanation, the reverend gentleman threatened to call in the borough constable, and have him lodged in gaol as an impostor. It was then considered that all further courtesy or consideration should be at an end, and the inspector was instructed to execute the warrant forthwith. Accordingly the shopman and the inspector went to the rectory, and demanded to see the rector. They had their wish in a twinkling, for Mr. Poole rushed out in a towering passion, and calling his groom, desired him instantly to go for the borough-reeve. The shopman stared: the reverend gentleman who now stood before him was *not* the Rev. Hezekiah Poole whom he was in quest of. The shopman entered into an explanation, which threw the reverend gentleman into a fit of laughter. Some clever thief had evidently been personating him,—that is, to a certain extent. His name was Poole, but not Hezekiah; he was rector of St. Mary's, not St. David's—there was no parish of that name in the district; he had never spoken to the Bishop of Salisbury; and, what was still more conclusive, had not been in London for the last seventeen years. The shopman and the police had nothing to do for it but to apologise for the mistake, to put themselves into the first train, and to make their way back to London as expeditiously as possible.

“Did the jeweller,” said I, “ever find out the thief?”

“Never,” replied Gray; “but I think I could give a pretty safe guess who he was.”

"Did he really belong to the Church?" said I.

"He certainly lived by the Church," said Gray; "that is, he got his living in churches. He was the 'Elephant.'"

I knew who the constable meant.

Some years ago a portly, sanctimonious-looking personage, dressed like a country parson, might be seen every Sunday in some one of the West-End churches—especially when a charity sermon was to be preached and the "nobs" were likely to attend—with large prayer-book in hand and white cambric pocket-handkerchief displayed, devoutly making the responses in a particularly sonorous manner. As he was evidently a stranger, apparently a clergyman from the country, the doors of the best pews were readily thrown open to him. This went on for some time, until the constant complaints of missing watches and purses drew attention to the new-comer, who, finding the West-End get rather warmer than pleasant, the "Elephant"—for, in consequence of his bulk, he had acquired, and was only known by, that *sobriquet*—made his way into the City, where the same kind of reputation followed him, and where he was at last apprehended for having possessed himself of one of the collecting-plates at a charity sermon at Bow Church, his respectable appearance having misled the churchwardens, but where he was fortunately stopped by Leadbitter just as he was quietly making his way out of the church with the proceeds of a very successful collection.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE ROBBERIES AT THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR'S.

A SERIES of mysterious robberies was perpetrated at the Russian embassy at Chesham House, which for a long time baffled all the experience and researches of the police. The property stolen was not only of the most valuable description, but much of it was priceless, from the circumstance of its consisting of gold medals, decorations of honour, and presents from crowned heads to Baron Brunow. How the robberies were effected, and by whom perpetrated, for a long time could not be ascertained. All that the police were able to make out was, that on opera-nights, when the baron and baroness were at the opera, some one contrived to gain access to the private apartments of the baron and baroness, and to carry off valuables or loose parcels of money. On one occasion it was the baroness's boudoir that was visited, and then some costly piece of jewelry was missed; on another, it was the baron's dressing-room that was entered, and the loose cash, or something of great value, purloined; on a third, the secretary to the embassy's rooms were robbed, without the smallest trace of the thief being left to guide inquiries.

It was quite evident that the thief was not only well acquainted with the premises, but was also thoroughly aware of the movements of the family. The authorities of Scotland Yard were applied to, and the

commissioners appointed the best men among the detectives to make an investigation. None of the constables employed could obtain the least clue to the perpetrators of the theft; and the baron and baroness became quite uneasy at the frequency of the thefts, and the impenetrable mystery in which they were shrouded. The Emperor of Russia about this time paid a visit to Queen Victoria; and as he stayed at the embassy for a day or two, double vigilance was used, but all to no purpose.

"It was a lucky thing for me," said Gray, then a sergeant in the C division, "that the best men in the force were beaten, as it led to my promotion as inspector. It fell out this way. Inspector Baker and myself were about a jewel-robbery at a large firm in Regent Street; we had been to Wales on the business, had returned, and had just got to the station-house in Vine Street, when information of a robbery at the Russian embassy the previous evening was brought in.

" 'Another robbery at the baron's,' said the inspector; 'this must not go on; we shall have the emperor robbed, and then the whole force will be in a pretty mess. Gray, you must take the matter in hand, and see what you can make of it.'

"I said at once, 'What can I do? all the crack men of the A's have tried and failed, and I don't like to touch the business, because it's most likely I shall fail too.'

" 'You must try, however,' said Inspector Baker. 'Go to the embassy, and see the baron at once.'

"I went," said Gray, "to Chesham House, and saw the baron and baroness. The baron said he was quite uncomfortable at these repeated robberies, and hoped I would do what I could to detect the thief. I told the baron I would make the attempt, but he must give me his assistance in any plan that I should suggest. The baron replied, I was welcome to take any step I thought most advisable, and I might depend on his support. I asked permission to have all the servants brought together, that I might put questions to them. This was immediately granted; and accordingly all the servants were summoned to attend in the steward's room. Seventeen or eighteen male and female servants being assembled together, I told them there was a thief among them, and they must help me to find the thief out. All the servants professed to be quite ready to lend me all the aid in their power; and I accordingly began my questions. I asked the men if they had any visitors the evening before: they all denied that any one had called on them. I inquired of the women if they had any followers: they all declared they had no followers. There was one servant, Jane Walker, the housemaid, who was absent. I sent for her, and put the same questions to her. She declared that no one had been to the house except James Oliver, the steward's room-boy, who had been recently discharged, and who came there occasionally. He had merely called, about six o'clock, to say that Mary, one of the under-housemaids, had won a Derby sweep, and then he went away. Mary, who was present, here *burst out a-laughing*, and said that she had never

put in a Derby sweep in her life, and that James must have been joking. The porter, Jones, said he recollected seeing the steward's room-boy go into the house by the back way, but it was later than six o'clock—it must have been eight o'clock; and one of the girls, who did not like the house-beer, also recollected meeting James coming down the back stairs about that time, as she went to get half a pint of beer from the beer-man when he called.

“ Having ascertained that James Oliver lived in Carrington Street, and as the story about the Derby sweep turned out not to be true, it struck me that I had got a clue to the thief. I put on a white choker, to take off the police-constable air, and to look as much like a butler as possible, and went immediately to Carrington Street. James Oliver lived with his mother and sister. When I got to the house he was not at home, but was said to be somewhere in the neighbourhood, and it was uncertain when he would come in. I gave out, to prevent suspicion, that I had called to tell him of a situation, and that if he did not go after it at once he would perhaps lose it. I pretended to be anxious for his advantage; and the mother thereupon told me I might perhaps find him at a watchmaker's named White. I went to White's, and was told that Oliver had been there, but had gone away about an hour before, and that he had mentioned he intended to call at a tailor's named Benjamin, in White Horse Street, to get measured for a *suit of clothes*. I posted off to Benjamin's and made *inquiries* after Oliver, and was asked what I wanted

with him, and why I came there to ask questions. I told Benjamin that I was Sergeant Gray; that a robbery had taken place at Baron Brunow's; and that Oliver was suspected. Benjamin said Oliver had been there that day, had paid him for a suit of clothes, and had left his old coat hanging up in the back shop. I got possession of the coat, and examined it. In a secret pocket I found a package of duplicates, all of which related to property taken from the baron at various times, and in particular the duplicate of a gold pencil-case, pledged at Masters', a pawnbroker in Piccadilly, the preceding evening. This gold pencil-case was part of the articles last stolen, which consisted of a gold watch, about twenty sovereigns, and this pencil-case. The property had been stolen out of a drawer in the baron's dressing-room.

"Being now on the right scent, I went back to Carrington Street, and waited for some time. I saw a young fellow enter the house, and being persuaded in my mind that this was Oliver, I knocked at the door, and was admitted. I spoke to the young man, and pretended that I wanted him to go with me to Baron Brunow, to give him the particulars of a situation that would suit him. The young man, however, evidently suspected something, and declined to accompany me: he said I was mistaken; his name was not Oliver—it was Thompson.

" 'Well,' said I, 'my name is Gray—Sergeant Gray, of the C division. You were at the baron's last night; you spoke to the porter, Jones, and told him Mary had won the Derby sweep.'

"The young man strongly denied all this. I told him I would chance his being the Oliver I wanted, and take him to the baron's. I took him to the embassy, and asked to see the baron. As soon as the baron came I produced the duplicates, and told how I became possessed of them, and the information I had acquired.

"'Ha,' said the baron, looking at my prisoner, 'this certainly is James Oliver, who was once in my service, and he must be the thief. Lock him up. I am happy you have found him out, as it will ease my mind, and will give to the baroness peace.'

"I called on Mr. Masters, and brought him to the embassy. When he saw Oliver he identified him immediately as the person who had pledged the pencil-case the previous evening. Having now sufficient evidence, I took Oliver to the station in Vine Street, and told the inspector all that had occurred. He was delighted at my success, more especially because all the crack detectives had previously failed.

"The duplicates found in Oliver's coat enabled the baron to recover his medals and crosses; and this was more agreeable to the baron than even the detection of the thief. Oliver was tried and convicted; but the baron interceded for him, and he only got three months.

"As soon as the trial was finished, the baron sent for me, and said, 'Mr. Gray, I am much pleased with you; the money which I now give will soon be spent; I must do something that will be good for you in another way.'

"The baron kept his word. A day or two after-

wards I was sent for to Scotland Yard, and informed that, in consequence of Baron Brunow's representations, I was promoted to the rank of inspector."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS.

CALLING at the *Weekly Dispatch* one day, the editor requested me to go down to Winchester, to furnish the details of a series of executions fixed to take place the following Saturday, towards which public attention was strongly directed.

It was just at that precise period when an agrarian revolution was impending; when agrarian riots and outrages were taking place pretty nearly in every county, but more particularly in Hampshire. The redoubtable "Swing," the English "Captain Rock" without the Hibernian murderous element, was then carrying terror through many an agricultural district. Stacks and farm-buildings were nightly fired; threatening notices were scattered about or sent through the post; mobs of agricultural labourers assembled by day and by night, visiting farmhouses and parsonages, with the view of compelling terrified occupants to enter into an agreement to lower rents and tithes. The only excuse—and it is a tolerably ample one—for these lawless assemblages of rude peasants and their summary proceeding was to be found in the undeniable fact that the labouring agricultural population were *miserably off*. Their condition had been deteriorating

for some years past ; they had been, for the most part, turned out of farmhouses to herd in cottages not fit for any animal less nice than a pig ; their wages had been reduced bit by bit, until even in the most liberal counties the maximum, after reaching starvation-point, was only kept from going below that sum upon which human nature could sustain life through the aid of workhouse relief. Beer-shops had just been established, and were doing their evil mission in further debasing the labourer ; Chartists and other professional agitators had taken advantage of the peculiar aspect of the times to ventilate their revolutionary doctrines and dogmas ; political and social questions of a novel import were unhinging society. The hour looked dark ; and at hand there were abundance of desperate men ready to take advantage of any combination of circumstances which should result in mob-law becoming more powerful than the law of the land.

Such was the period to which I refer. Government was quite alive to the danger, and quite prepared to put it down at any cost.

I shall not go minutely into details ; it will be sufficient to state that all classes who had property to lose—especially the land-owner and land-occupier—combined for mutual protection, and, with Government support, proceeded to deal by the strong hand with the lawless mobs wherever they encountered them. The result of this rigour was, that several hundreds of poor half-starved devils were apprehended and lodged in the *Hampshire gaols*. A special commission was organised to try the rioters ; and at the close of the commission

there were many scores sentenced to transportation, and six to death by hanging.

To describe effectively the scene which the principal street of Winchester presented to the spectator night and day would be utterly impossible. The sight was most piteous. Women and children might be seen frantic with grief at losing fathers, brothers, husbands—the only shield betwixt them and starvation or the workhouse. Sobs and shrieks were heard on every side; and those who were eye-witnesses of the painful exhibition could hardly fail to retain a vivid recollection of its harrowing character to the latest moment of existence.

I am not going to pronounce an opinion one way or other; but this I will say,—that had my case been that of the desperate and ignorant offenders, my conduct, I fear, would have very much resembled theirs. They felt the pinch; they had not intelligence or information enough to guide them to a true perception of the causes; they looked only to their taskmasters, and to the “light that led astray” from their revolutionary instructors; and they adopted the readiest means, the only means in their power—that of intimidation, brute force, and destruction of property—to redress their real and fancied injuries, and to better their position.

Among the six left for execution was a youth whose case excited general comment and commiseration. He had formed one of a lawless mob who had gone round to the different farmers, and while in illegal procession *had been encountered by one of the Barings, who,*

being a county magistrate, went personally among the rioters and laid hold of this juvenile Jack Cade. This was not a wise act, one would think; it naturally provoked resistance, and the lad struck his captor. The lad was among those who were eventually lodged in prison; and as it was intended by the special commission to strike a decisive blow against this-kind of assemblages, he having clearly been proved to have assaulted a magistrate, one of the leading gentry of the district, it was determined to make an example of him. The public feeling was strongly roused in favour of this culprit. His youth, and the circumstances under which he had been impelled to commit the assault, were looked upon as so many reasons why mercy should be extended to him, and up to the last it was hoped that he would receive the lenity of the crown. The fatal day approached; no reprieve reached Winchester Gaol; but as it was conjectured a rescue might be attempted, the constabulary and the soldiery were organised so as to be ready to act at a moment's notice.

I am writing from memory; and as thirty years of varied scenes and adventures have not particularly strengthened recollection, I may be at fault in the minor particulars, but in the essentials I know I am correct. When the proposition to attend was made to me, I embraced it; for though I had a natural repugnance towards such scenes, yet, as I felt pretty sure that my "press" engagements would oblige me to *make* myself personally familiar with them, I thought *the present was a favourable opportunity to begin my studies in this direction.*

Accordingly I undertook the business, and made immediate arrangements to coach it as far as Winchester. I went by mail; and I shall never forget the cheerless journey that cheerless night. It was about the fall of the year; the night was sleety and foggy. I travelled outside, by way of economy; and I passed seven or eight as uncomfortable hours as it was possible to conceive. I well remember, as we approached Winchester, that the guard pointed out to me in different directions six or seven incendiary fires. Batches of ragged and half-drunken farm-labourers were to be seen congregated at every beer-shop and roadside public-house we passed. All wore a truculent and desperate look,—not like the olden-time honest English labourer, but like a compound of poacher and hedges-ruffian.

About four o'clock in the morning we got to Winchester. I engaged a bed immediately, as I was numbed with cold; and having ascertained from Boots that the execution was fixed for eight o'clock, I gave strict orders to be called an hour beforehand, in order that I might be present at the fearful ceremony. I had hardly thawed myself by the aid of the genial help of the blankets, and was just going off into an uneasy doze, when I heard the tolling of a bell. I listened: the toll was at measured intervals; and at once I surmised that it was the knell of the victims. I jumped out of bed, dressed myself quickly, and ran towards the prison. I could not gain admittance. The gates were barred, and not even the usual "open sesams" of *"the press"* was available in this instance. The truth

was, that the county authorities, acting, I presume, with the sanction of the Home Office and the judges, had arranged matters so as to carry out the executions two hours before the time publicly fixed. This was done to defeat any attempt, should it be made by the country people, to obstruct the proceedings, and to baffle the prying propensities of the press.

I made a circuit of the prison, and quite at the back, in an unfrequented and solitary lane, I found half a dozen stragglers assembled. I learned from them that only two of the six who had been sentenced were to be executed. Justice had relented at the eleventh hour; the public voice, through the public journals, had caused this change. One of the two was the lad to whom I have already alluded; the other was a travelling tinker, about the worst and most notorious character in the district. Day was breaking; and this enabled me to see, just peering above the high wall of the prison, a gallows with a couple of ropes suspended from it. After contemplating these preparations for a few minutes, my ears suddenly caught the sounds of subdued wailing and of sharp mortal suffering. In another instant two heads were slowly protruded above the wall, as if ascending a ladder. They were those of the youth and the tinker. The fatal cap was on, but not yet drawn over their faces; their hands were pinioned, their throats bare, and they were evidently already beginning to experience the "bitterness of death." Nothing else could be heard but low agonising cries of "O Lord, have mercy! O Christ, have mercy upon us!" These cries were repeated incea-

santly and rapidly, drowning the murmured prayers and exhortations of the clergyman who attended them to the scaffold. The rope was placed round their necks; and as they stood for a moment paralysed with dread, I was struck with the contrast their appearance presented. The lad was ghastly pale, and shaking as if struck with ague. The face of the tinker—naturally swarthy—was absolutely blue, as if in the last stage of Asiatic cholera; and his eyes, with nothing but the whites visible in his strong agony, gave him an appearance that could not be looked upon without a prolonged shudder.

The hangman noiselessly approached, and drew the caps closely over both faces; the cries ceased; the minister of God raised his voice in prayer, gradually receding from the platform until he reached a firm resting-place. The bolt was then suddenly withdrawn; the two bodies dropped sheer down for a few feet, checked sharply by the rope; and in ten minutes all was over: but not until the death-struggles of both were frightfully visible beneath the tight-fitting cotton-cap. A loud and deep groan, and shouts of "Murder, murder!" from the few who were present concluded this dreadful exhibition.

I made my way back to the inn, too much unnerved to sleep. The vain supplications and fearful death-struggles of the wretched victims haunted me all day, and even at this distant period rise to my mind's eye as vividly as if the occurrence had passed only yesterday.

*When I got to Town with my report, a good deal*

of disappointment was manifested at the comparatively meagre details. The "execution" was to be the great "feature" of the journal for that week. It was shorn of much of its interest by the unexpected reprieve which four out of the six condemned offenders had received, and of course the expected harvest of additional copies was not fully reaped. But the execution of the lad formed a popular subject for comment on the part of several journals who had not the fear of libel before them.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE "BLACK MISSIONARY."

THE extent of daily impositions on the benevolent in London is incredible: the total amount of misdirected charity is as difficult to credit. All doubt about these matters would be dissipated by a visit to the Mendicity Society's offices in Red Lion Square, or an hour's conversation with one of the Mendicity Society's constables. The ten thousand forms in which the science of "fraudulent begging" disguises itself are a proof, on the one hand, of the inexhaustible fund of benevolence—and may we add, without meaning offence, of credulity?—that exists among the wealthy classes; and, on the other, of the endless resources and stratagems which the tribe of impostors have at command to attain their object. Street-beggars form a very insignificant portion of the London begging brotherhood. *The sum total of their daily collections, though very large, sinks into utter insignificance when placed beside*

the amount obtained by the fraternity of begging-letter writers. Nineteen-twentieths of the street-beggars are Irish, principally women with young children, sent over on speculation, with their husbands, to try for work, or to gain a "settlement," or to exercise their habitual trade of begging—any thing, in fact, that will effect the object of removing from Irish localities the proper burden of supporting their own poor. The street-beggars are hardly worth a word of notice; the police and the Society's officers are quite enough to keep down their numbers, and to prevent them from becoming more than an annoyance, though no organisation of authority could ever be so complete as to clear the streets effectually.

But that class known as the "begging-letter writers" and "begging-petition impostors" are the real nuisances and brigands of society—numerous, daring, and inventive. It is only in England that such a class could exist and flourish. The English race, especially the wealthy English, are full of charity; there is more money given away in London in one day than in any dozen of European capitals in a year. If the extent of private charity is illimitable, the modes of imposition are correspondingly numerous. I was very soon made aware of this fact by my daily experience at the police-court. That experience inspired me with a deep reverence for the charitable tendencies of my countrymen; at the same time it led me to deplore the extent to which imposition was carried, and to endeavour, as far as my humble powers extended, by the aid of my position on the press, to

expose and to check it whenever a tale presenting features of cunningly-manufactured distress came under my notice.

Before I would give publicity to a tale of destitution, however plausibly and circumstantially related, I took care to ascertain that it was genuine in character, and that the party to be benefited was deserving of assistance. I have the great satisfaction of knowing that, while I have been the instrument of obtaining substantial and frequently effective relief in many truly necessitous cases, I have also been the means of unmasking premeditated hypocrisy and defeating the well-laid plans of impostors. It would be quite as well if the same precautions were always used before tales of apparent hardship and poverty were given to the public. Such is the wide-spread and inexhaustible fund of benevolence in London, that it only wants a word to call it into boundless activity. It is only necessary for a tale of woe to find its way into the public journals for money to flow towards the sufferer. Donations pour in from every quarter, and a sum is sometimes thus got together which frequently affords efficient relief for the remainder of the recipient's life.

It occasionally occurs, with all the care and caution that can be exercised, that the unworthy are among these recipients of charity. Had their stories at the outset been properly investigated, the relators would have been found worthless characters and rank impostors. *I do not think, however, that the Marlborough-Street Police-Court has had much to complain of in*

the way of imposition on the benevolent. I do not recollect a single case in which donors of charitable subscriptions have had reason to regret the way their bounty was applied. There was one particular description of cases to which I never could turn a deaf ear. It was the "casuals;" not the sturdy, hale, and lazy beggar, but the broken-down, out-of-work labourer—the homeless and foodless through sickness or inability to obtain employment—the miserable woman with a miserable train of children,—in fact, that numerous body of temporary paupers who could establish no claim to permanent workhouse relief, or who, if relieved, were put off with the miserable dole of a loaf of bread. In winter especially the crowd of casuals becomes painfully enlarged; and it was in this direction, in the fear of the urgent necessities of the applicants being overlooked, that I usually did my best to obtain a welcome pittance from the funds of the poor-box. The press was never backward in seconding these efforts. A hint that the poor-box required replenishing always found ready publicity, and a ready response on the part of the wealthy.

The amount of permanent good which a judicious donation from the poor-box has effected, and still effects, in hundreds of cases annually, would hardly be believed. At one period destitute "casuals" were so numerous as seriously to interfere with the regular business of the court. The magistrates could not be expected to take upon themselves the duties of the relieving officer; nor could the police, on whom *devolved the task of inquiring into the cases and charac-*

ters of applicants, be expected to give up so large a portion of their time without remuneration.

The practice of giving relief, as a rule, from the poor-box has been discontinued; but of course when cases of real distress come spontaneously under the notice of the bench, the funds—and they are always tolerably ample—are made available. There is here a wide field for the exertions of the charitable, but there are many obvious reasons why it would be improper to make the police-court a common resort to the indigent.

If the cases of *real* distress that came before the court were many, the charges of fictitious and fraudulent poverty were even more. "Begging-letter writing" is a kind of profession. Every sort of device calculated to touch the feelings is pressed into the service of begging-letter impostors, and a curious book might be written on the various and cleverly-contrived modes adopted to obtain money from parties of known benevolence.

The principal head-quarters of those professional begging-petition "writers," who kept an assortment of petitions and simulated cases of distress on hand to suit all customers, and who were paid according to length, novelty, and pathos, were in Buckridge Street, before it was pulled down, and Short's Gardens. The begging-letter "impostors" mostly lived in Westminster, Pye Street being their favourite locality. A regular list of noblemen and gentlemen, and especially of *charitable ladies*, was kept by all the fraternity. This list was prepared from private information, from news-

papers, and from the published reports of charitable institutions. The "soft" part of every donor was accurately gauged, and begging petitions and applications were ingeniously framed and specially adapted to the idiosyncrasy of parties to be imposed upon. It was these two classes—the begging-letter "writer" and the begging-letter "presenter"—that kept the Mendicity Society most actively employed. Several of the officers were occupied principally in hunting up these impostors, and baffling their schemes of imposition. With all their vigilance, the officers were only enabled to prevent a small portion of daily frauds. The publicity however, given to such cases by the press has done a very great deal of good; for though it has not succeeded in wholly extirpating the breed; it has very much thinned their numbers.

I have already introduced William Horsford to the notice of my readers in one character; I will give an instance of his ingenuity in his own special line.

"The cleverest fellow that ever I came across," said Horsford, "was 'Black Sam,' the West-India pogram. He took up the 'pious' dodge, and used to get no end of money out of ladies and gentlemen who were known to have a religious turn. He called himself the 'West-India, coloured, converted missionary,' and gammoned the nobs that he'd been a slave in Jamaica, and used to worship Obi and Mumbo Jumbo; but having been converted, he had come to England to get subscriptions that he might go back and help to convert his brother-blacks in the West Indies. He lagged a lot of money to pay for printing a volume of

his nigger sermons, though he could neither read nor write. Then he got up a committee of kind old ladies who subscribed to supply the naked blackies with breeches and their wives with petticoats, as he made out that the planters made them work in broad daylight in the plantations in Adam and Eve's Garden-of-Eden suits. Black Sam had been a valet, but having robbed his master, he ran away, and got a berth as cook on board one of the African traders. Being always drunk, he was discharged at the docks, and then he set up the missionary business. I was on his trail for at least two years; but he always managed to give me the slip, and worked in such an artful way that I never could get properly hold of any thing strong enough to make a sure case against him. The Mendicity received above two hundred letters from noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies whom he had imposed on, and from the way the parties were 'done,' he must have made at least ten pounds a week regularly. I've followed him sometimes for a whole day together, when I knew he was out 'at work,' but it was 'no go;' he managed his business so cleverly, by the help of a couple of 'marms' whom he went about with, that I never could get near enough to grab him. I missed him, however, all at once; but our Society soon found that he'd only gone into the country, and was turning in the 'tin' in prime style. The manager begged hard that I'd make it my business to look after him, as the Society had a case at last that would *help to a conviction*,—the gentleman who had been *imposed upon having* written to say he was ready,

when we could take the 'missionary,' to come forward and give evidence.

"One morning the manager handed me a letter from this gentleman, dated from Fitzroy Square, enclosing a petition from the 'missionary,' who was to call for an answer the following morning. My plan was made up in a moment; it was to personate the gentleman, and to get Blackey to call at the house. I asked Bostock, a brother-constable, to keep a look-out at one end of the square, while I took charge of the other. It wouldn't do to go in our own clothes; for though Black Sam didn't know us, he was too 'wide awake' to do any business if he thought he was dodged; and he was so wide awake that he never would make his calls until he saw the street clear, and had one of his lady-scouts at each end to give him the 'office,' if any of us showed on his track. As I pretty well knew where he 'hung out,' I was watching for him early. About eleven o'clock he came along, rigged like a parson — a prime new suit of black, white choker, and broad-brimmed tile. He had with him a small leathern bag, in which he kept his sermons and subscription-lists, and under one arm he'd got a large Bible.

"The appointment was for half-past eleven, and at that time I was ready for him. I made myself look like a sporting gent; got a straw hat, with a bit of ribbon round it, and a shooting-jacket. In the square I stowed away with the gardener a game-bag and a fowling-piece. I watched the whole party into a public-house in Clipstone Street; and, while they were

having a 'dram' a piece, I heard Black Sam tell one of the women to get three pounds of rump-steak and plenty of baked potatoes, and have the lot ready by one o'clock, when he would join them in the public-house..

"I slipped out and got to the square before the missionary,' and had just time enough to get myself in proper 'fig,' to put my game-bag over my shoulder, get a cigar alight, and mark half-a-sovereign so as to know it again. Presently I saw my missionary come into the square, walk all the way round it, and look down all the streets; when he had satisfied himself that no one of a suspicious appearance was on the watch, he goes up the steps of the house he had appointed to call at, and rings the bell. I opened the gate of the square, which was just opposite, and came out, smoking my cigar, and looking as if all the square belonged to me. Blackey stared for a minute, but didn't 'tumble' to me; so I walked up to him, and said, with as grand a manner as I could put on,

"'Haw—well, friend, what's your business here?"

"'You am de master ob dis yar house, I 'spect, sar?" says he.

"'Spect I am,' said I; 'so if you've any business with the master, you must be precious quick, as I'm off on a shooting-trip in the country. I'm only waiting in town to give a kind missionary gentleman, as is going out to convert the black niggers, a trifle, cos he wrote a letter about it to me yesterday.'

"'Hah—yas, sar, I am dat misshonar, sar, who want to save all de soul of my benighted brudder

blacks. I write dat letter, sar. What you please to gib, sar ?

" 'Can't give more than half a sov. to begin with,' said I; 'here it is, if it's any use to you.'

" 'Tank you—ten million tousand tanks,' said he, pulling out a memorandum-book. 'I lay dis money up-stairs in hebben for you bi'mby. Now, den, sar, when I say all my prayer dis night, what is de name of de good gentleman as gib charity to de poor black dat I shall mention to de Lord ?'

" 'Oh,' said I, 'you may just say Bill Horsford, of the Mendicity——'

" 'Eh, you name Horsford !' said the missionary, jumping back, and grinning like an ourang-outang.

" 'Yes, Blackey,' said I, 'I'm Bill Horsford ; your little game's up. I've been after you a precious long time, and I've nibbled you at last. You may as well come quietly, or it will be all the worse for you.'

" But Blackey was too game to be taken so easily ; and before I could guard myself, he up with his big Bible, gave me a regular topper, which floored me, and started off like a lamplighter. I got on my legs, and 'chivy'd' him round the square ; and though I could run above a bit, he could run faster ; and I'm blest if I don't think he would have got clear away if he hadn't run against Bostock, who gave him his toe as he passed him, and sent him flying into a grocer's shop, where we took him.

" The magistrate gave him three months on two separate cases ; and I took charge of his travelling-bag, and have had since many a hearty laugh over

the contents, especially the letters from the charitable ladies who belonged to the 'breeches' club, and the 'sermons,' which, I was told, had been prigged out of Jeremy Diddler, or Taylor, or some such name."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SILENT SHAVE.

A FIRST-RATE shaver is as great a *rara avis* as a first-rate poet;—it is seldom that more than one or two of each *genus* make their appearance in a generation. I have never known but *one*, and yet I have been shaved by half the barbers in London, and by barbers innumerable in the country. A "clean" shave is the poor man's luxury; an "easy" shave, every man's delight. Few barbers combine both excellences. Shaving is an "art;" and yet it has no fixed rules, no normal schools, no regular training. To be a perfect professor of the tonsorial art, a man must have a genius for the business. Practice and observation may improve, but only natural gifts can make the perfect shaver.

London barbers, for the most part, are mere chin-scrapers. Stiff-bearded, thin-skinned mortals, of nervous temperament, submit their chins to the lathering process with feelings somewhat akin to those with which they visit the dentist. Shaving, in short, as practised nowadays, is a surgical operation, in which *blood is drawn*, the beard removed, and the nerves *literally lacerated*, for the same money. The London

barber thinks he is exhibiting the true art and mystery of shaving when, seizing his brush, he dips it into scalding water, gives you the first touch of small torture, and proceeds to grind the lather into your very flesh. Then, ill-set razor in hand, he commences some preliminary flourishes, which, to your alarmed vision, appear to approximate so heedlessly as that the last, to a moral certainty, must take off a bit of your nose; next he goes on stolidly job-jobbing the razor-edge right upon the skin, or making long and reckless sweeps, which crucify your nerves, and inspire in you an intense longing for the conclusion of the flaying infliction.

This is bad enough, only not quite so bad as the country barber who, having nothing more delicate to operate upon than pachydermatous bumpkins, scrapes away ruthlessly, as if tearing the bristles from a bacon-hog with an oyster-shell, excising both beard and cuticle, and leaving the sensitive *cutis* smarting and bleeding for an hour afterwards.

On the Continent matters are not much mended. Barbers there are somewhat more civilised in their process; but then they work with such detestable cutlery. I was not a little astonished on one occasion when, travelling in Germany, and requiring to be shaved, I entered a *salon*, before the door of which the emblematical brass basin, with piece cut out to fit into the neck, was hung, as an intimation that beards were *coupéd* there. Having been formally seated in an uncomfortable high arm-chair, with my head thrown back against a hard cushion at an excruciating angle,

the German operator,—a huge, gaunt, military-looking figure, with cocked hat and thigh-boots, flourishing an instrument not unlike the formidable scimitar with which we see Blue Beard provided in children's picture-books,—taking me by the whole nose, solemnly addressed this question to me :

“Will your gracious ludship please to be thumbed or spooned?”

I was fairly pozed ; but, after some parleying, I made shift to comprehend that the primitive mode of shaving was still in force in that benighted German village. The shaver was accustomed to thrust his “thumb” into the shavee's mouth, for the purpose of tightening the cheek, or the option was politely given to effect the same result with a “spoon.” The customer had, therefore, the privilege of choosing between a dirty thumb,—which, to do the German barber justice, he always dipped into scented water before introducing into the customer's mouth,—or a spoon that required an aperture like Tim Bobbin's to receive it, and which, when not thus employed, did duty for an unmentionable number of domestic purposes.

I have never met with but one barber who really performed the promise so prominently set forth in the window of “easy shaving,” and by whom it was a positive luxury to be lathered. I have said but *one*. I should correct the assertion, and say but one family. Father and son had the same qualities in common. Hand light as a lady's,—cool, clean, and small ; and *the brush, of real badger's tail, charged with creamy soap, applied with velvety softness.* The keen razor

glided over the skin unfelt, or, if felt, with a sensation of security and pleasure: a mouse asleep might have been shaved without being awakened.

It was one of my peculiarities never to be able to shave myself satisfactorily. I found out this "pearl" above all price, this indisputable "easy-shaving" shop. It was in close proximity to the police-court, and for fifteen years, punctually at three o'clock daily, Sundays excepted, I found myself seated in a comfortable chair, undergoing my twopennyworth of tonsorial enjoyment. The shop was, like the owners, original and peerless in its way. It was at the corner of Cross Street, commanding a full view of three streets, with public-houses at each corner. All the incomings and outgoings of these public-houses, all the public ingress and egress of these three streets,—and they were thronged from dawn to dark,—were visible from the shop; and in addition there were the corner posts, round which, like a statute-fair, daily congregated a bevy of sottish, lazy, out-of-work journeymen tailors.

The windows of the shop were exactly contrived for observing what was going on in the streets and public-houses opposite. One window looked up and down Carnaby Street, and into King Street; the side-window gave a view of every thing that passed up Cross Street. The shop itself was worth an inspection. In various glass cases were to be seen small fancy dogs, capitally stuffed, and here and there counterfeit presentments, coloured and uncoloured, of the most noted pugilists, pedestrians, and canine heroes of the day.

*But it was father and son who afforded me endless*

materials for speculation and amusement. It was hardly possible, without a close inspection, to distinguish one from the other, they were so exactly alike in height, make, features, and dress. They wore the same kind of mouse-coloured, baggy breeches; each sported a counterpart of the brown-sleeved undress jacket; each had on a similar short white apron; each wore an odd-shaped, impish, light-brown wig, plastered in the same *outré* manner over the forehead, and perched on the apex of the cranium, so as to exhibit the pole of the neck behind in vulture-like fashion; and each possessed the same old, grave, and taciturn look. They went about their work in the same deliberate and noiseless way, never addressing a needless question to any customer, yet seeming to know by tuition who every customer was and what each customer wanted. The son, however, excited my wonder and curiosity the most. He appeared to know every thing and every body, although I never could find out that he stirred from the shop. If there was a fight to come off, he had private information of the whereabouts, and of the condition of the men; if there was a foot-race for a heavy stake, he could tell whether the "American Stag" or the "Regent-Street Pet" had the best chance of winning. Nay, after the event had happened, and the affair became, as may be supposed, the topic of conversation in the shop, a word or two laconically dropped by him would show that he knew more about the matter than all the talkers put together, and *incontestably that he must have been bodily present. I picked up many a valuable hint from the remarks that*

passed in the shop among the customers, and became tolerably well initiated into matters which were till then thorough mysteries to me. For instance, I acquired no small knowledge of the points of fancy dogs. I found out that the breeding of them was a highly profitable trade; that ladies who had "pets"—especially female pets—were anxious to find suitable canine alliances for them; and that fancy dogs of known breed and blood brought their owners a large price for a temporary morganatic marriage. I discovered that the son was a dog fancier and dealer of no mean pretensions; that down in the regions below he kept a wonderful collection of fancy breeds; that one of the stuffed dogs in the show-case was a certain "Romeo," famous among the craft for entailing on his descendants all his special characteristics; that another was the equally renowned "Duke," who was worth his two guineas weekly as putative papa of the little pups of the lady-pets of ladies of distinction. I became learned in the points of parlour-dogs. I could tell pretty nearly as well as most amateurs whether a specimen was the true breed, or to be catalogued as a duffer; whether the nose, if a Charles's-breed spaniel, was of the proper snubness and smuttiness; whether flew in the proper places and of the proper length; and whether the ears came up—or rather hung down—to the proper standard of canine perfection. I learned that pug-dogs—once the rage—were coming again into fashion, but that the true "periwinkle-tail" was a rarity which commanded its own price. All this information, and much more of a *miscellaneous* character, I collected while undergoing the

operation of shaving. It was of itself well worth the collective twopences I expended in the shop.

I have said that for fifteen years at least I hardly ever missed a day on which I did not indulge in a visit to the easy-shaving shop. During all that period I never remember speaking to the pair of shavers—never, at least, but one fatal *once*. The shaving operation passed in dumb-show. The brace of barbers—their name was Dawes—seemed to fall instinctively into my reticent humour; neither of them, that I can recollect, ever addressed a question to me that required a verbal answer. While being shaved I could, and did, indulge freely in all sorts of reveries. I used to “con over” the “points of humour” for my forthcoming comic case; and if tickled with my own nascent wit,—a contingency the judicious reader will feel, no doubt, must have occurred pretty often,—I could break out into a quiet laugh, with the perfect assurance that the shaving process would be promptly suspended until all danger of being “nicked” had passed.

Some of my best productions originated in this shop. I don't know why I need conceal the fact, considering that one of the greatest poets of any age has left on record that several of his most sublime inspirations streamed, as Bacon has it, into his mind, and received a “local habitation and a name,” while seated on the domestic throne.

My daily presence was looked forward to as a matter of course. I always found the big chair vacant at *the recurring hour*, and the son generally prepared for *action*, each party being as mute as mackerel—at least

towards each other. The son, however, was always ready with his pithy remarks to the company, and his ready bits of information; his eye, from habit, was constantly thrown towards one or other of the windows; no man, dog, or horse could pass up the streets—no male or female toper, on the sly, could enter the public-houses—without being marked by him. This was known so widely, that neighbours constantly dropped in to make inquiries.

"Seen my husband to-day, Mr. Dawes?" an anxious wife, with dinner waiting, popping in her head, would ask.

"Went up the street half an hour ago with Mike," would perhaps be the answer.

"Father hasn't been home to-day?" inquires a little girl.

"He's in the Crown, opposite; don't go for him, as he's out on the 'loose,' and you may come in for a clout or two on the head."

"Where's Dick Fogarty?" another would ask.

"Called off 'the post' to a job, and gone away to Nichol's for orders."

This was only a common and daily display of his faculty of observation. Sometimes it was turned to a profitable account.

One day, while dreaming pleasantly under the delectable influence of the razor, Avis, a rather too fast officer, bustled in:

"Look alive, Sam," said he, "and give us a scrape, as I'm off to Whitechapel. Lady Churchill has just been to the beak, and stated that her black-and-tan

Blenheim's boned out of the phaeton. It's a safe three sovereigns in my pocket, for I know where to drop upon the prig; and I'll have the dog in her ladyship's house, and the three quid in my purse, in less than an hour, or I'll eat my staff."

With Sam Dawes, junior, however, Avis was no favourite.

"You'll pocket them three sovereigns over the left," said Sam; "and you'll have a tough lump of 'lignum' for your dinner."

"Bet you a farden cake, and me have first bite, that I know who prigged the dog," said Avis, nettled. "Jack Easthope wasn't in Regent Street to-day for nothing; what do you say to that, my know-all-about-nothing covey?"

"Well, Jack Easthope's just dropped into the Crown, and you'll be in time to collar him and the lady's dog, pervising she's lost *two* of the same breed," said Sam.

Clements, who came in at the moment, and who had firm faith in the little barber's intelligence, as soon as Avis had quitted the shop, remarked:

"The lost dog is Lady Churchill's favourite; she has offered three pounds, and I'll stand half to be put on the pincher."

"Where was the dog missed?"

"From the phaeton, as it was standing at Sowerby's, in Regent Street."

"How long ago?"

"*Half an hour.*"

"*Well, just half an hour ago 'Curly Bill' bolted*

down King Street," said Sam, with a meaning look at the officer; "he came out of Regent Street. He'd got something that kicked under his coat, and there was a bit of blue ribbon hanging down."

"The dog had a blue ribbon round his neck," said Clements.

"Bill hangs out at the Mermaid, at the back of Marshall Street," said Samuel, nodding.

Clements made no further remark, but left the shop, and returned in about five minutes.

"You're out this time, old fellow," said he; "Bill was there, certainly, but he swore hard and fast he hadn't been in Regent Street all the morning."

"Then you hain't got the dog, of course?" said Sam, with a twinkle of the eye.

"No; how could I?"

"Thought not," replied Sam, giving a slight kick at the coat-pocket of the officer. A small bark and a prolonged whine rendered concealment of no avail; the secret was revealed, and in another moment the little dog, with its blue neck-ribbon, was produced.

I will correct my mistake in saying that my daily "shave" was invariably a "silent" one. I recollect, to my cost, that I spoke *once*.<sup>\*</sup> Having to attend a morning concert at the Hanover-Square Rooms, I took my twopennyworth of chin-polish an hour or two earlier than usual. The concert was over at three o'clock; and as I came through Carnaby Street, I mechanically turned into the easy shaving-shop, and seated myself in the operation-chair. I was lathered as usual, *sub silentio*; but the first stroke of the razor recalled to

my recollection a dim notion of the same process an hour or two back.

"You shaved me this morning!" said I abruptly.

The sound of my voice caused the barber to start; his hand, in sympathy with his surprise, forgot its caution, and I received a smart gash for the first and last time.

I never put another question after that.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE "SAVILLE" GAMBLING-HOUSE.

GAMING-HOUSES are one of the specialities of the West End. The "hells" of the present day, however, are not quite like the "hells" of the past. The alteration in the law, the power given to the police to break into any suspected house, on representation made by two neighbours or witnesses at Scotland Yard to the effect that the house is used for the purposes of gaming or frequented by common gamblers, have done much to change the ancient character of "hells," and to reduce their number; they still, however, exist in sufficient plenty to give full opportunity to those who cannot resist the temptation afforded by hazard, rouge-et-noir, or roulette, to ruin themselves speedily and infallibly. We say "infallibly," because there is not, there never was, and never will be, a regular London "hell" established on "fair-play" principles. The old keepers of "hells" were, without exception, broken-down gamblers, gambling crimps, and Jew money-lenders—men

of desperate characters, and utterly without human compunction or principle. All regular "hells" were supplied with a staff of "bonnets," *i. e.* confederates in the plot to rob unwary visitors, and to "ring in" at the proper moment loaded and coggled dice, so contrived as to turn up aces or sixes at will; with cards so prepared as to cut honours, or turn up a particular colour, red or black; with roulette-tables fraudulently constructed in such a way as that, by depressing a concealed spring, perhaps with the foot on the floor or by the pressure of the croupier against the table, the ball is guided into a certain number, so naturally as to deceive the most practised and suspicious eye.

The late gaoler of the police-court, Wilks, had quite a collection of these ingenious rascalities, taken from various gambling-houses which had been suddenly entered and searched by the police before sufficient time had been given to destroy the evidences of fraud.

The "bonnets," who would be found, on the entrance of a moneyed visitor, sitting round the table, apparently absorbed in play, were always provided with false dice to "ring in" if an opportunity occurred, and were thoroughly trained in what is termed, in gambling parlance, the "landing," "tripping," and "securing" one or both dice, so as to make a "main," high or low, a matter of certainty. With such dead odds against players, the marvel is that any victim could be foolish enough ever to enter one of these houses. But the evidences of swindling and unfair play were generally so well masked in the leading "hells," as to remain undetected until brought to light

by the researches of the police. The unsuspecting moneyed simpleton, because he could detect nothing foul, thought that all was conducted on the "square." And possibly the play might be "square" up to a certain point; but when the stake was of sufficient magnitude, or the "plant" had been fully made, then the "cross" was invariably called into operation, to the ruin of the victim.

As the police were invested with formidable powers, and usually planned their attacks with great secrecy and cleverness, the whole force of the genius of hell-keepers was directed towards the adoption of effective precautions against a surprise. The outward approaches—doors, passages, and windows—were constructed with great strength. Iron plates, iron shutters, heavy chains, bolts, and trap-doors were freely put into requisition. The roofs were particularly well guarded, to prevent the ingress of the enemy, and to secure egress in case the place was successfully stormed. Furnaces were kept constantly burning, to consume instantly the materials of gambling. Fire-grates were ingeniously constructed, so as to allow a portion of the fire to be lifted off, and cards, dice, and boxes to be thrown into the opening and burnt up before the police could force an entrance. But the great security of the gaming-house keepers and frequenters was found to lie in having a large body of water ready to turn on in the ordinary closet. It was only necessary to throw into the closet-pan all the materials of gambling, and to turn on the water, for the whole *of this evidence to be carried with a rush right into the common sewer, defying the possibility of being recovered*

or identified. Of course, in proportion to the precautions taken by the hell-keepers, were the ingenious devices invented by the police to get evidence, and to baffle precautions. Plain-clothes men became soon too well known to be serviceable; besides, it was difficult to find a constable at a pinch with sufficient *nous* to act his part so as to elude detection when he succeeded in gaining access to an establishment; and it was well known that if detected his position would be by no means an enviable one. Then, again, sudden and forcible entrance was found to be of no use whatever; for though house after house notorious as hells was invaded, and all parties present taken into custody, yet, from the complete and ingenious way in which keepers, bonnets, and gamblers had contrived to destroy every particle of what the law called "gambling implements," it was found quite impossible to make out a case; consequently defendants were all discharged, and something very like ridicule fell upon the repeatedly abortive attempts of the police to obtain convictions.

There was one gaming-house in particular against which the police had in vain attempted to get evidence enough to warrant them in applying for an authority to break into the place. In fact this hell had completely set the police at defiance, and had so cleverly arranged its system, that no one, unless he was one of the club, or was introduced by a member, could ever hope to gain admittance.

The hell was situated close to Barker's Panorama, and the house has been, I believe, since converted into a *large and respectable* coffee-house. This point of the

narration gives me an opportunity of again introducing the late well-known William Horsford,—one of the most active of the Mendicity Society's officers, who possessed a remarkable talent for tracing out and detecting begging-letter writers and the superior class of begging impostors,—and of placing the continuation of my story about this Leicester-Square hell into his hands.

"Well," continued Horsford, "Superintendent Beresford, who never liked to be beat, says to me :

" 'Bill, can't you give us a lift here ?'

" 'Make it worth my while,' says I ; 'give me my own time, and I don't care if I lend a hand.'

" 'We will settle what you're to have by and by,' said he ; 'at all events, if you can't do any thing, your expenses are sure.'

"I went to work, but I had a deal of trouble to get hold of any one, they were all such artful cards belonging to that crib. However, I managed to find out that a cove who went by the name of Captain McCrae was the secretary to the 'Saville Literary Club,' as the gaming-house was called ; that he was very fond of flowers ; that he was a regular tulip-fancier ; and that he always breakfasted at a coffee-house in Windmill Street. I went to one of our governors, who was famous for his hothouse plants, and asked him to let me have a few flowers for a morning or two ; and having 'shown him a light,' he told me to come and pick whatever I liked from his conservatory. I got a handsome nosegay, not forgetting a few tulips, and then went home and made *myself look as much like a farmer as possible*. I stuck *on my nob* a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, and

togged myself out in blue coat, yellow waistcoat, buckskin breeches, and top-boots, with a stunning big sporting shawl round my neck. I went into the coffee-room, and there sat my Captain, reading the paper. I pushed myself into the box where he was with 'Sarvant, sir. Fine fresh growing morning this; bring out the early peas.'

"The Captain wasn't to be had; so he only gave a kind of grunt, and moved up to the window. I shoved my nosegay just before him, and dropped my stick with a whack on the table for the waiter. The Captain looked up, and was going to say something angrily, when, catching sight of the nosegay, he looked at it for a minute.

"Fine flowers those, sir; very fine, indeed. Never saw finer tulips in my life.'

"Pratty well,' said I. 'They all comed out of my own garden. My missus makes me bring up a handful every morning to 'Town for my daughter, who's lately married, and was always fond of these sort of things.'

"'Couldn't show finer tulips in Covent Garden, or at Chatsworth, I'm sure,' said the Captain. 'It's a treat only to look at them.'

"I let him admire them as much as he liked, and having had my breakfast and done as much as I wanted that morning, I got up and bid him good by. The next morning I brought a bigger nosegay, with more tulips, and the Captain was on to it directly.

"'You seem to take a fancy to my nosegay,' said I; 'and as it's big enough for two, take half, and welcome.'

"The Captain at first refused ; but I made him take half, and we soon got the best of friends. I told him as how I came to town to see 'Lunnun sights,' and, if he'd like to take a run down to my place, I'd give him a real 'nigger-head' tulip-root and a shake-down. I went on in this way for about a week, by which time the Captain and me got as thick as thieves. I thought it about time to bring matters to a close, as I had shelled out a lot of tin ; so I told him the next morning that I was going back to my farm, for I'd seen every thing in London I wanted to see except one thing, which I meant to see that night—that I was a going to have just one rattle at the 'bones;' that I'd got a friend to take me to Davis's, and, if he'd go with me, I'd stand the racket, but I wouldn't drop more than a fi'pund note.

"The Captain advised me not to go near Davis, for I should be sure to be robbed, he said ; but, as he did a little now and then in 'shaking the elbow' himself, he would take me to a friend's house, where I might play or look on, just as I pleased. I made an engagement to meet him in the evening ; and about eleven o'clock I went with him to the 'Saville,' where, after giving the pass-word to the porter—the porter who let us in—I was told I might come whenever I liked, by merely saying to the porter that I was the Captain's friend. We went up-stairs, and found only about half a dozen in a room which had a hazard-table and a roulette-board all ready. I stopped an hour, till about *twenty more came in*, and play then began. I took a '*likeness*' of every one there, especially the bankers,

the croupiers, and the bonnets, that I might know 'em again when I wanted 'em.

"When I left, I started off to the station, and gave the superintendent a history of what I had done. It was arranged to make the attack the next night; a body of constables was to meet quietly at a public-house in Sidney's Alley, and when the clock struck twelve come out, and break in without further notice.

"I went to the 'Saville' about half-past eleven o'clock, and was admitted immediately. When the clock struck, I heard a sudden bustle below. A bell was set ringing furiously, and instantly all the players stopped in dismay. The porter rushed up, and holloed out that the police had forced the first door, and would be in the room in less than a minute. Cards, dice, cloth, and the roulette-table were piled up in a jiffy, and put into a basket. The gas-lamp was instantly drawn down, and, by a turn of the screw, with it came also the rose, showing a place in the ceiling large enough to hold the basket, which was placed in it hastily, and the gas-lamp pushed up to its usual position.

"'Look after the bank,' says the Captain; 'the police will be sure to search us. I'll take charge of the gold, and my country friend here will take care of the notes. Here's 150*l.*—one fifty, and ten tens. It won't look so dark if the notes are found in your possession.'

"I collared the swag, and promised faithfully to take the greatest care of it. The gamblers then put *wine and glasses* on the table, pulled out cigars, and,

drawing chairs, sat round the table as if they were only a friendly smoking and drinking party. The police, with Beresford at their head, soon made their appearance. The Captain pretended to be indignant at the visit, and insisted on knowing what the police had come for. The superintendent told him he had a warrant to search the house as a common gambling-house.

“‘Search, and be ——! No, I won’t swear,’ says the Captain, who affected to be in a towering rage; ‘I’ll go to work in another way: I’ll bring an action for trespass. This is a private club for smoking and literary conversation. These gentlemen are authors—every one of them literary men—who come here to study.’

“‘All right, Captain,’ said the superintendent, ‘I don’t see your library, however: but I’ve a friend here who, I dare say, can show me where you keep your *books*’ (the flash word for a pack of cards). ‘Come, Bill,’ said he, giving me a nod, ‘let these “literary” gentlemen see that, instead of smoking cigars, they should have *smoked* you.’

“The Captain looked at me with a face as long as his arm.

“‘The d—l! What, the countryman a *nose*! A pretty flat I’ve been!’

“‘Never mind, Captain,’ said I; ‘you’re welcome to the missus’s flowers, and my nigger-head tulip—when you get it; but I’m sorry you can’t have a day’s *shooting* this season at my farm, as I’m afeard you *won’t be out of quod* in time.’

"'Hand over my money,' says he.

"'Oh, yes, when we get before the beak to-morrow. The money, till then, will be safe enough with me.'

"Six-and-twenty were taken to the station-house; and the next morning three were fined the full penalty of 100*l.* a-piece; the others were let off with a five-pounder."

"And how about the bank-notes?"

"Gave them up in court honourable, as I said I would; one fifty, and eight tens."

"Why, that's only 130*l.*," said Clements. "The Captain, you know, said he gave you 150*l.*"

"So he might have said, and swore it, if he liked; but I'll take my oath I counted the notes over twice when I got home, and couldn't make more than 130*l.* of them no how."

"Hem!" said Clements. "Then the job turned out tolerable, after all?"

"Pretty well," said Horsford. "I didn't grumble. But the best of it was that the Captain, who wanted to gammon me that I had 150*l.* of him, never heard the last of the tulip caper. All his 'pals' used to chaff him, and holloa out, 'How are you, my tulip?' till he was ready to bite his own head off."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## "THIRSTY JOE."

ONE of the most remarkable characters of the day in what I suppose I must call the "lower walks" of life was "Thirsty Joe." Many yet living will recollect the rubicund visage and stalwart frame of the old waterman who officiated for so many years at the stand opposite Apsley House. The real name of this personage was George Brewer; but, from his invariable complaint to all comers throughout the day that he was "werry dry," and his persevering petitions to moisten his throttle with beer in all its varieties, or spirits neat, hot, or cold "without,"—nothing liquid coming amiss except pump-water, — he acquired the *sobriquet* of "Thirsty Joe," which he retained to the last day of his public life.

Although between seventy and eighty years old at the time I speak of (thirty years ago), he bore no evidence about him of his advanced age. He was still of powerful make, as recusant cabmen who forgot to "drop their coppers" for watering horse or "dish-clouting" cab knew to their cost; and he went about the work of his stand with the alacrity of youth, looking as fresh as a "four-year old." His immense ruby-red features, about the size and colour of a warming-pan, his fell of snow-white woolly hair and whiskers, rendered him a *remarkable object* at all times.

*But he was best known to the general public from*

his perpetual collisions with cabmen, either on account of some attempt to "bilk" him of his "regulars," or because he would not be a party to a "plant" on some "swell" who had been dining out with such perseverance as to seriously jeopardise his perpendicular progress. No "night" cabman, or "buck," was ever permitted to pick up this kind of prize as a fare from his stand. "Thirsty Joe" would invariably take charge of the "swell" himself, put him into the vehicle of a trustworthy driver, book the number of the cab or coach, as the case might be, and call the next day to see if the trust had been faithfully discharged.

The result of this line of conduct was twofold : first, it obtained for the "Piccadilly" rank a first-class character, and for Thirsty Joe no end of "largesses" from "nobs" who had fortunately retained sense enough to avoid the "Haymarket"—then justly called the "thieves' rank"—and to make their way to where person and property had a tolerable certainty of reaching home in safety ; and next, it brought upon him numerous personal conflicts, to engage in which he was ever found "nothing loth." In fact, in his youth he had been in the ring—not the London, but the provincial ring ; and among country roughs his immense bone, muscle, and weight caused him to be reckoned a very ugly customer.

His pugilistic qualities were kept in exercise for years afterwards, when coachman to Sir John Wilson, brewer and sportsman, one of the famous Colonel Berkeley's associates, and, like the gallant Colonel, a *warm patron of all kinds of manly sports, "pugilism"*

—then in the heyday of its popularity—among the rest. It was the custom of Sir John, whenever a candidate for fistic honour from the Bristol school showed more than average fistic talent, to send him up to London, for the purpose of placing him under his coachman's care, whose task it was to train him *secundem artem* until sufficiently accomplished in the self-defence science of the London school to make it safe to match him against a suitable metropolitan hero of the ring.

But there was another peculiarity which kept the "science" of Thirsty Joe in full activity: he had a mortal aversion to a soldier.

"Can't abide a swaddy," said Joe; "never could. Wenhever I seed one a coming along, I'd shoulder him off the pavement. Swaddy 'ud off with his belt, and I'd jest lift up my sledge-hammer fist, and down 'ud go swaddy. Sir Richard Birnie, the beak, knowed me werry well.

"Wot, here again, Brewer?" he'd say; 'it's the third time this week I've had you afore me for the same hoffence.'

"Can't abide a swaddy, your worship, and that's all about it," says I.

"Then," says he, 'this time it's twenty "bob," and next time the full penalty, mind you.'

In his later years, Thirsty Joe's exploits were more particularly directed against cabmen—a rough lot, who found a rougher hand in Joe to deal with them. His method was peculiar. If his quarrel was with a brace of these worthies, he would seize one in each hand, and

knock their heads together until they cried "*Peccavi*." If a single antagonist, he would lay hold of him with a polar-bear grasp, thrust him against the pump, then, turning his back, give him once or twice the full weight and power of his *butt*-end—a visitation about as formidable as a blow from the buffer of a steam-engine.

His frequent visits to the police-court had taught him something of law, which made him careful to keep on what he conceived to be the windy side of it, by never using fist or foot.

"Can't prove as I assaulted him, your worship; never lifted my hand to him; only just banged him agin the pump with my *anti-front* side."

Even the gravity of the dignified Mr. Dyer was not proof against this line of defence.

"I think," said that magistrate, with an imperceptible smile, on one occasion when this plea was urged, "that you have literally committed an *assault*; therefore I fine you a shilling."

But Thirsty Joe's great pride was to relate to any kind listener who would volunteer a "pot of heavy" or a drop of "summut short" that passage in his personal history when he himself was a master hackney-coachman.

I may here mention that Joe's constant and faithful companion wherever he went, and especially in his frequent visits to the police-court, was his wife—a little, sharp, talkative woman, of whom, notwithstanding his enormous bulk and prowess, he stood unmistakably in awe.

"*There ain't sitch another hooman in the hole*

world as my missus." Joe was evidently proud of her. "I wouldn't change her for the best lady in the kingdom; and I'll be bound she wouldn't change me for the best lord. I vos a hindependent man once; I could yarn no end of money; and if I hadn't laid it out in houses,"—public-houses he meant,—“but had guv it to my old hooman to keep, I shouldn't be only a waterman now. Hows'ever, in my time I've been a master, and had two hackney-coaches of my own, with three pair of hosses. That was arter I left Sir John to set up for myself, worse luck."

"What brought you down in the world?" I asked.

"Wot? Why, jest stand another pot, cos I'm 'werry dry,' and I'll tell you all about it."

The "pot" was ordered; and Thirsty Joe having taken toll, and handed the beverage to his wife,—who honourably received shares in his bibulous perquisites,—he proceeded to detail his list of mishaps after setting up for himself. Horses went lame, corn went up to a famishing price, and a perpetual drought in his throat took him into favourite public-houses when he ought to have been looking out for a job.

"But my missus kept things straight a long time. If I didn't come home at the regular hour, she vos arter me. She 'chivy'd' all round the coach-stands; and when she found me, if I was lumpy, and couldn't drive home, why she shoved me into the coach and druv home herself. Warn't it so, old hooman?"

The "old hooman" nodded acquiescence.

"*There she is,*" said Thirsty Joe, with evident pride, "*as good a judge of horseflesh as any coper in*

London. She bought all the hosses and corn; and, what's more, when I got 'moppy,' and couldn't do stable-work,—and every man is overtaken now and then,—she'd rub down the hosses, wash their legs, and put 'em up for the night better 'an any stableman as ever I come across."

"I didn't buy Old Boney, though," said the lady.

"That's about right," said Joe. "I bought him, one night, of a man that was taking him to the knacker's."

"And I called him 'Old Boney' the moment I set eyes on him, because he was such a 'natomy,'" said the wife. "When my old man brought him to the stables, I could have knocked his head off. 'What's this?' says I. 'It's a new hoss, missus,' says he; 'I got him dirt cheap; so if we find he ain't got no "go" in him, I'll take him to Cow Cross to-morrow, and make all my money of his hide and hoofs.' Well, I looked at the poor brute, and thought to myself it's a long time since you blow'd out your old hide with a feed of corn. I put him into a stall, gave him a ball myself and a warm mash, and clapped a lot of horse-cloths on him, and left him comfortable for the night; though I never expected to see him alive the next morning. My old man takes out the coach next day, and in the afternoon comes home with another horse lame.

"'Here, my gal,' says he, 'here's more luck; the best horse going on three legs, and t'other too weak to pull the drag hisself.'"

"I recollect all about it," interposed Joe. "When

I got home, I was precious mad, and 'werry dry;' and arter a pint or two of real Burton, I went to the stable, and there I saw my last night's purchase a picking his bit of hay out of the rack. I says to my old hooman:

"'Why,' says I, 'what have you been and gone and done to Old Boney? He looks a ten-pun' note better than he did when I bought him. I'm blessed if I don't put him to, and see if he can't yarn his wittles.'

"Well, I put him to at ten o'clock, and brought him home at three in the morning, by which time he had helped to yarn fifteen shillings; and from that day up to five years, just as long as I was a master, I never had a hoss to beat him at work, heavy or light."

"Ah! poor Old Boney was a comical creature," said Mrs. Brewer; "he was a Christian in every thing but being able to speak. He wouldn't take his corn from no hand but mine; he would hang his nose over the crib, and follow me all about the stable and yard with his eyes wherever I went. He always looked for me to rub his poor old nose a bit, otherwise he kept on winnying and making a noise just as if he was fretting. But the funniest thing was with his feed; he would not touch his corn unless I brought the sieve to him. If my master or one of our men attempted to feed him, he would put his head under the manger, and there he'd stand until I was fetched to move about his corn. I got quite fond of Old Boney at last; but all I could do wouldn't save him. *He came home* real bad one day, and I gave him some

warm gruel, with half a pint of ale in it: but, he didn't get better; and I sat up all night minding him. It was of no use, however; poor Old Boney never got over the attack; and in the middle of the night" (*wiping her eyes*) "he died of the dry gripes."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE "GAME CHICKEN."

HAVING, I trust properly, introduced "Thirsty Joe" to the notice of my readers, I will repeat one of his amusing communications, when, being "werry dry," as usual, he had induced me to stand a pot of his favourite tipple at the Marlborough Head. I wish I could give the story exactly in his own racy Doric, it would be then as entertaining to my readers now as it was to myself then.

The celebrated pugilist Harry Pearce, known as the "Game Chicken," "came out" under Thirsty Joe's auspices in this way: Pearce, then a very young man, with a rising Bristol reputation, but not formally a member of the "ring," was brought under the notice of Colonel Berkeley in the following manner:

While passing through the Berkeley-Castle grounds with a basket on his arm, he was stopped by a couple of the Colonel's keepers, who insisted on seeing the contents of the basket. The keepers were powerful fellows, and noted bruisers in their way. One of them laid hold of the basket, and was instantly "floored." His companion came to the rescue, and

was "grassed" in the same unceremonious way. A regular fight ensued—two to one. Pierce thrashed them both soundly, and walked off in triumph. The *fracas* came to Colonel Berkeley's ears. Pearce was sent for, and having modestly expressed a wish for an introduction to the London ring, Colonel Berkeley called Sir John Wilson, then on a visit, and Sir John gave Pearce a letter to his coachman, "Thirsty Joe," directing him to take Pearce in hand and see what could be made of him.

"I got my letter," said Thirsty Joe; "and having put up the carriage, I went to the Hampshire Hog, in Soho, to see arter my man. I looked into the tap-room, and there sot a youngish country chap in a smock, with a hat which looked as if the dogs had knawed the brim on it all round.

"'Be your name Pearce?' says I.

"'Ees, zur,' says he.

"'Be you the chap as is comed here to lick all London?"

"'Zo they may zay, master,' said Pearce, in regular 'Zummersetshire;' 'but I'd rather loike to pitch into a couple of pounds of beef-skirt just now, vor I hain't done much in the grubbing line lately.'

"Well, I guv him a tidy 'blow out,' and took him home, and told my missus to let him have a shake-down in the hay-loft.

"The next morning he offered to help me in the stables, and I set him to wash the carriage. But he *was as hockard* as a swaddy, and warn't a bit of use—*was he, old hooman* (to his wife)?"

"That's 'cause you fancies as nobody could wash a carriage but yourself," replied the "old hooman;" "this here as I'll say, there wasn't a handier lad any where than Harry. He'd do any thing you asked him; and was always good-humoured and laughing like."

"Well, he was a ready, pleasant chap enough," said Joe, "but—he couldn't wash a carriage. He was only fit to muck-out the stables and pump water for my old hooman. He'd been with us about a week, when I thought as I'd just give him a taste of the gloves. So I axed my missus for the leathers; but she was so taken up with Harry, that she wouldn't give 'em to us."

"I didn't like to see him hurt," said the wife; "so I says to Harry, 'Don't you have nothing to do with the gloves, for my old man only wants to knock you about; but I won't let him.' 'Never mind about me, mother,' Harry says—he always called me mother—'if George likes a turn with the gloves, don't 'ee stop him. I can take care of myself; and we sha'n't do one another no mischief.'"

"That's about it," says Joe. "My missus gives us the gloves, and we went up into the corn-loft; and I can promise you as I meant to let Harry into a 'secret' afore we come down again."

"Yes, and I got into the hay-loft above, where I could see every thing," said the old hooman.

"Did you?" said Joe, looking unpleasantly enlightened; "then it's no use telling no lies about *what happened*. We went to work, and I gave him one or

two clumsy thumps ; for I didn't think much more on him jest then than I should of a swaddy.

" 'Halloa, George !' says he, 'how's it to be—is us to play heavy or light ?'

" 'Do all as you know,' says I, 'cos I am going to do all as I can.'

" I'd hardly said the words afore I got a couple of facers that set my eyes a-dancing. This riled me, and I went at him like a windmill. But, lawks ! I might as well have tried to hit a bird or floor an elephant. He had me every way. He druv me about the loft as if he was walloping a sack of flour, and finished by knocking me bang into the corn-bin."

" He-he-he !" said the wife ; " I seed it all. I thought I should ha' busted with laughing when I looked at your two great legs sticking up."

" Well, well, never mind about my great legs," said Joe, looking sour.

" Harry put out his hand in a laughing way to pull me out of the bin.

" 'No harm done, George,' says he ; 'get up, and let's have t'other round.'

" 'Not if I knows it,' says I ; 'let somebody else have the next round ; and if you do as much to him as you've done to me, he won't want "t'other round" in a hurry.'

" I must tell you at this time the two most noted men in the ring was Jim Belcher and Jack Birmingham. But Jim was out-and-out the best man as *ever went into the ring*. He held the belt, for he'd *licked every body*, and of course was the champion.

"Jack Birmingham was in the Life Guards : a flash chap, as thought he could fight a bit ; and so he got hisself matched agin Jim. But though a good 'un among yokels, he warn't no more fit to stand up to Jim than you or I is. Jim was a great pal of mine. He was a first-rate racket-player ; and I remember his coming across my stable-yard as well as if it wor to-day, with his handkercher up to his face ; he'd got one of his eyes smashed with a racket-ball ; and though he recovered and fowt agin, and beat all his men, up to the time when he was licked by Harry, he was never the man agin he used to be in his best days. However, after the corn-loft business, I thought it would be as well to let Jack Birmingham try his luck, as he'd got scent of the Bristol countryman. So one day, when Jack calls, he asked me about Harry.

" 'Oh,' says I, 'he's a nobody ; he knows as much about fighting as a hass ; you've only got to kick his behind, and send him back to Bristol.'

" 'Get him to put on the gloves with me, and I'll stand a pot,' says Jim.

" 'Well,' says I, 'I'll try what I can do. Here, Harry,' says I—he was having his dinner—'here's Muster Jack Birmingham wants jest a little turn at the gloves with you for five minutes.'

"I heard Harry say to my old hooman, 'Cut us another bit of pudden, mother ;' when out he comes into the yard, with his pudden in his hand, eating on it, and in his laughing way says :

" 'You zee, Georgy, as I'm ready for another wisit to the corn-loft.'

"I whispers first to Jack, 'Mind you sarve out the countryman;' and then to Harry, 'Jack says he'll lick your head off; let him have it hot and strong.'

"The pair went into the loft, and I crept up to where my missus had looked on at us afore, and I seed 'em go to work. Jack, who was proud of his science, began dodging and feinting for an opening. Harry stood as quiet as a lamb for a minute, then shot out and caught Jack a spanker on the nose that drew his cork. This got Jack's shirt out; and he went in to mill in right-down savage arnest. Harry went in too, and poor Jack, like me, got leathered all over the loft, and at last knocked funder into the corn-bin than ever I did. I didn't stop to see no more; for I know'd Jack had got his gruel, and that, as his monkey was up, he'd want to have a row and a round with me; so I came down into the yard, and got into the carriage, and shut myself in. Presently out of the loft he came, cussing and swearing.

"'Where's that beggar, George Brewer?—where is he? I'll larn him a trick worth two of his'n.'"

"I see him come down the ladder," said the wife. "What's the matter, Mr. Birmingham?" says I.

"'The matter, missus!' says he; 'look what a pretty mess I'm in;' and, sure, he was in a pickle; his own mother wouldn't a know'd him. 'Here's George been and gammoned me the countryman's a know-nothing, when he knows more 'an both on us put together.'

"'Don't be in a passion, Mr. Birmingham,' says I.

'I'll get you some water, and a wash will put you to rights.' "

"Well," resumed Joe, "that's about right; after Jack had cooled down a bit, I comes out of the carriage, and soaps him over with the promise of standing my pot to his'n, and telling him as I got wuss sarved out by Harry than he did; and that I thought with his science he'd be able to tackle the countryman, and take the conceit out of him.

"A day or two arter this my guvner come to Town, and sent to say that Colonel Berkeley wanted to match Harry agin a big Irishman, which one of the Barrymores had picked up in St. Giles's. The match was fixed to come off in the tennis-court in the evening. I told Harry of it, and got him to promise as he'd not show what he could do all at once, as I wanted to lay out a little money on him, and I'd let him 'stand in' with me.

"In the evening we went to the tennis-court, and there was the Colonel, and the Colonel's friend with his Irishman.

"'Can you depend on your man?' says the Colonel to me.

"'You'll be safe to bet that he licks the Irishman in fifteen minutes,' says I.

"The men stripped and came to the scratch. The first round or two the Irishman seemed to have it all his own way.

"'Two to one on Paddy,' says his backer.

"'I'll take you, my lord, in tens,' says I; 'and if you'll say three to one, my man shall win in ten minutes, or I'll lick him myself.'

“ ‘Done, Brewer,’ says he.

“And then I says quietly to Harry, ‘You’ve on’y got ten minutes to do all your work; go in and win.’

“Harry did go in; and in five minutes regularly slogged the Irishman, winding up with a straight shoulder-hit on the throat, which sent Paddy head over heels, deaf to time for near ten minutes.

“ ‘You rascal,’ says his lordship, shaking his fist at me; ‘there’s your money; and I’ve a good mind to give you a hiding for gammoning me into the last bet.’

“ ‘Hope not, your lordship,’ says I; ‘but if you want to win your money back, next time don’t lay agin Harry; he’s an out-and-outer.’

“And so he proved, for Harry won all his fights; and I made a little fortin, if I could only have kept it, by betting long odds on him.”

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A “DANDY OF THE OLD SCHOOL.”

I HAD occasion to visit the printer of one of the leading journals on a matter of business. The gentleman in question was then in the King’s Bench for libel, an action having gone against the paper. I found him in comfortable quarters in the state rooms; and having settled the little affair which occasioned my visit, I spent the remainder of the morning in looking about the place, which then offered a good deal that was novel and interesting to an observant eye. At that

period imprisonment on *mesne process* was not abolished; the Bench was consequently in a very different condition to what it is at present, the inmates being very numerous, and many remarkable characters within its walls.

One of the tenants of the state rooms was Captain Bailey, a military dandy, who was there for debt. This gentleman, who was of patrician family, having run through a handsome fortune, had at last adopted the plebeian step of whitewashing himself through the agency of the Insolvent Debtors' Court.

Many persons will yet recollect the amusement which his examination in Portugal Street created, particularly that portion which regarded his personal expenditure. The Captain, who led the fashion in his day, was noted for the Sybarite peculiarities of his toilet; and among other extravagances scheduled, which created the most surprise and merriment, was the item in a West-End tradesman's bill of a dozen of French cambric night-shirts trimmed with lace, the charge for which was fifty guineas.

While sauntering round the place I met an acquaintance, who pointed out several of the celebrities, amongst them, of course, the Captain, and a member of the fistic ring, one Robert Hall, known as "Bob the fighting butcher." The Captain, who had then been only inducted into the state rooms a few days before, had already drawn upon himself a good deal of observation from the dandyism of his dress, his "hyacinthine curls," and *haut ton* style of living; amongst the inmates he went by the familiar name of "Miss Bailey."

The fighting butcher was a notoriety in his way, owing to the ascendancy he had gained over the un-aristocratic portion of the residents of "Tenterden Park"—as the Bench was then termed—by the prowess he exhibited with his fist.

It was the settled custom, whenever a quarrel occurred between any of the inmates of the prison, to meet on the racket-ground after the hour at which the public were excluded, and to fight it out. The racket-ground was also the favourite and fashionable morning resort, and here most of the crack London players might occasionally be seen taking part in the matches got up by the higher classes of the prisoners.

I found the racket-ground occupied by several sets of players, in one portion of which was the Captain, and in the adjacent ground the fighting butcher. The Captain's whole appearance was certainly very remarkable. He had evidently just come from under the hands of his valet, and was the very *beau idéal* of an "exquisite" of the first water. He was attired in nankeen tights, silk stockings, and pumps; he wore an embroidered cricket-jacket ornamented with coral buttons, while a turned-down collar, *à la Byron*, displayed his dark and muscular neck, round which was a pink scarf confined by a splendid cameo. His fingers were decorated with massive rings, and a superb watch-chain and seals were pendent from his neck. But the most noticeable portion of his toilet was his hair, which was in great profusion, raven black, carefully oiled, parted in the Milton style on the foretop, and curled in ringlets down each side of his face. A small

imperial set off the dazzling whiteness of his teeth, which were very fine, and kept in beautiful order. It was this apparent effeminacy of exterior, accompanied by the fashionable drawl and lisp, which had earned for the Captain the *sobriquet* of "Miss," though there was nothing otherwise in his appearance to warrant any inference that might be unwarily drawn from the uncomplimentary nickname.

The Captain was a tall, large-boned man, in the prime of life, and with that unmistakable and inimitable air of high fashion which is peculiar to the high-bred English gentleman. I say peculiar to *English* gentlemen advisedly, for an English gentleman is *sui generis*. No amount of rank, polish, or dress in the higher orders of any other nation confers that ease, carriage, and dignity which combine to form our national speciality—the English gentleman.

The Captain was engaged in a game of rackets with Samuel Evans, better known as "Young Dutch Sam the Phenomenon," who had just given proof of his wonderful powers as a boxer, and who was then esteemed one of the best racket-players in England. The Captain was capering about with imperturbable *sang froid* in his expensive yet unsuitable costume, totally regardless of the jeers to which the spectators now and then gave audible vent. Having made an abortive hit, he stooped down to pick up the ball, and in doing so presented an inviting target to the "fighting butcher," who was one of a racket party of the next base. The butcher, always the first to perpetrate a practical joke, threw a sly wink at his companions, stepped forward,

and brought down his bamboo bat with stinging force on the Captain's unprotected rear. The intense pain of the sudden visitation straightened the Captain in an instant, caused him to utter a shrieking oath, to jump at least a yard high, and then to apply his hand to the "part aggrieved," rubbing away vigorously until the pain was allayed. Roars of laughter followed this exploit, and the butcher, with mock humility, began a series of "beg pardon, your ladyship," asserting that the blow intended for the ball had been accidentally intercepted by the most prominent part of the Captain's person. The dark visage of the Captain absolutely looked like glowing copper, but he made no remark; and turning to Young Dutch Sam, desired him to continue the match. The game was soon over; and the Captain, having settled the charge for the ground, walked quietly up to the butcher, and, touching him on the shoulder with his racket-bat, said:

"My man, I must be in your debt until the time for ringing out. At half-past six o'clock I shall expect you on the parade, where I mean to give you such a thrashing as will deter you from taking a liberty with me at any future time."

The butcher stared contemptuously.

"Oh, certainly, Miss—that is, Captain: get my hair curled, and shall be very happy to take a little walk with you, Miss—I mean Captain; but couldn't think of having a 'set-to' with such a ladylike-looking gentleman."

"If you are five minutes behind time," said the

Captain sternly, "I'll drag you out of your chummage, and horsewhip you round the parade."

Then, turning to Young Dutch Sam, he said :

"Sam, my lad, get half a dozen fellows together who know how to keep a ring; pay them well; and at half-past six o'clock I shall want you to look after me."

"All right, Captain," said Young Dutch Sam respectfully; "you may depend on me."

The Captain turned away and walked to his chambers.

The challenge spread like wildfire over the place, and the racket-ground was speedily filled with curious spectators. The butcher, who certainly did not want for pluck, evidently was discomforted at the turn the affair had taken. With the instinctive deference which persons in his station of life feel towards people in the superior ranks of society, he exhibited something like shame at having acted in the insulting way he had done to the Captain, and for the necessity that now existed to come into personal contact with one so much higher in station to himself.

"Hang it," said he to Young Dutch Sam, to whom he was well known; "if I'd a thought the Captain would have took the matter up this way, I'd have asked his pardon there and then; for that's what he wants, I suppose. It was only a stupid joke, and I should like the Captain to know it was only meant as such."

"The Captain," said Sam dryly, "means to make earnest of your joke, I can promise you; so I'd advise you to look out for a friend to pick you up, for you'll want him."

"Well," said the butcher, "if it comes to a fight, I'll allow the Captain to give me a slap or two, and let him off easy."

"The Captain won't let *you* off easy," said Sam significantly; "he's learnt all Harry Holt" (then a celebrated professor of the art of self-defence) "can teach him; and Harry himself, I can tell you, would have thought twice about it before he gave the Captain such a lick as you did."

At six the bell rang for the visitors to leave, and at half-past six the clearance was accomplished. I was one, however, who remained behind. The Bench was quite alive by this time. Even the keepers, who had heard that the "swell was going to have a 'turn-up' with the butcher," agreed to wink at this breach of the rules, and to keep a bright look-out for the governor, should the uproar attract his notice.

Young Dutch Sam had performed his part of the business quite in the professional style. Six or seven big fellows were armed with sticks, and they at once set about beating out the ring. The butcher was there, with a coarse, countyside bencher,—the bully of the place until the butcher came in, and then he did not dare to display his usual bluster and ruffianism,—who had agreed to second him. It was still evident enough that the butcher would have been glad of any decent pretext to back out of a business which his impertinent folly had brought on himself, and which he considered *at best* bore something of a ludicrous aspect about it.

*Precisely as the prison-clock went the half-hour, the Captain was seen crossing the place in the direction*

of the racket-ground. But how changed! All his dandyism had disappeared. The foppish dress was discarded, the jewelry laid aside, and the ringlets hidden beneath a close-fitting helmet smoking-cap. The pumps and silk stockings and flesh-tights had given place to a pair of strong, spiked high-lows and knee-corduroys. As he strode firmly forward, with a rough, loose coat about him, he looked as if he would prove a very "ugly customer" to any kind of "heavy weight."

Having made his way to the ring, he threw off his upper coat, and appeared in regular amateur boxing trim, with nothing on the upper part of his person but a short-sleeved under-vest, belted round the waist with a scarf. This costume displayed his wiry make, long sinewy arms, and muscular throat to advantage; in short, he might have passed for a regular "professional," had it not been for the air of high breeding which no kind of disguise or costume could have wholly obliterated.

The Captain, who appeared perfectly cool,—except about the eyes, which were full of the tiger,—said to his second:

"Come, let us get to work at once, Sam; minute time, you know."

The combatants were brought to the scratch. The butcher seemed rather perplexed what to do; but the Captain gave him no time for reflection, for, measuring his distance rapidly and scientifically, he let fly straight from the shoulder, caught the butcher a heavy spank on the nose, and drew blood instantly. The butcher, *roused by the unexpected severity of the blow, lashed*

out in return rather wildly, but was stopped with scientific precision, and after receiving several more hits, delivered with stinging severity, was fairly knocked off his legs by a flush hit. The Captain walked to the corner of the ring, and deliberately seated himself on his second's knee.

"Pretty well for first round, Sam," said he; "two events—first blood and first knock-down blow—in my favour."

Sam—who, though young in his fighting career, was about one of the best seconds that ever stepped into the ring—looked over to the corner where the Captain's opponent was receiving the usual attentions from his bully second.

"You've woke up the butcher, Captain, and no mistake; and he means to go in to fight next round. Don't want to win too fast; go at him steady, and wait."

The Captain nodded, and "time" being called, he placed himself in attitude. The butcher had partly got rid of his diffidence, and evidently meant mischief. He hustled in artistically to fight; the Captain stopped several heavy blows, and returned with punishing effect; but the butcher, who would not be denied, got home with one or two facers, which drew blood from the mouth, and brought out the Captain's ire. His second in vain called out, "Steady, Captain, steady." The Captain lost his coolness; and, in his eagerness to punish, missed his distance several times, which occasioned him twice to stumble, and to be, as it were, at the butcher's mercy; but the butcher,—

though he might, according to the recognised rules of boxing, have taken severe advantage of the Captain's temporary helplessness,—with true British generosity, threw up his hands, and allowed the Captain to resume his guard. The Captain, however, was in no mood to thank even a forbearing opponent for such compliments; he went to work in right-down earnest, and a terrific rally ensued. The Captain took his punishment without flinching, returned blow for blow, and, after a protracted round that would have done no discredit to the best boxer in the ring, finished by a straight hit from the shoulder, which again knocked the butcher completely off his legs.

The Captain walked up to his second, cleared his mouth from the blood, and then proceeded to sponge away the consequences of the last round. Having done this, he coolly put the seconds aside, and going right up to the butcher, said :

"You are a brave fellow. I've given you the lesson I intended; you've given me one I did not expect, and now we'll shake hands."

The butcher grasped the Captain's hand, and said :

"Captain, I humbly ask your pardon; I've been a fool throughout, and only got what I deserved; I've had many a good man stand before me, but never a better than you, so I hope you'll think no more about the business of this morning."

"I don't think the worse of you for your apology," said the Captain; "and now, mind, after this we are friends."

The bully, who began to feel a little spice of con-

tempt for the butcher's tameness, here said tauntingly :

"So you are going to let yourself be licked by a great girl, butcher! Well, shut up, and don't come any of your bounce after this."

"I'll take the bounce out of you pretty quick, if you give me any of your cheek," replied the butcher, in an exasperated tone.

"Don't try that caper," replied the bully, "or perhaps I'll serve you worse than the Captain."

The Captain, who heard the dialogue, clapped the butcher on the shoulder.

"I'll give you a sovereign if you'll go in and thrash that blackguard," said he.

"I don't want the sovereign; I'll lick him for nothing," said the butcher.

The ring was again formed; and the butcher, who had no delicacy about the way he should deal with his man, now showed that he well deserved the reputation he had previously gained, for in the very first round he regularly "smashed" the bully, who, finding that he was over-matched, fairly took to his heels and bolted out of the ring.

The Captain pulled out a couple of sovereigns.

"Here, butcher," said he, "take one for yourself; let the other be spent among your friends in beer."

A loud cheer was raised as the Captain left the ring, and the spectators adjourned to the public-house next to the state-room, and continued to imbibe the *beer so liberally* provided for them until the last "*tanner*" had vanished into the pocket of mine host.

I afterwards learned that the Captain and the butcher became great cronies, the butcher ever evincing the utmost respect for his swell acquaintance.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE LONDON BURGLAR AND THE LONDON FENCE.

THE popular belief that burglars and "fences," *i.e.* buyers of stolen property, are outcasts of society, living apart in out-of-the-way localities sacred to crime and criminals, is an entire mistake. Some of the most notorious "fences" and burglars, well known in their respective vocations to the police, have figured among the gayest and most unconcerned of the frequenters of places of public resort; have occupied houses in the best parts of London, living in something more than even "horse-and-gig" respectability, and having country-houses furnished in comfortable, not to say luxurious, style. Many highly-respectable people in highly-respectable streets would be startled to know who their neighbours are. Perhaps the most authentic evidence of the truth of this statement is to be found in the case of the wealthy "fence" Eneas Giffard, and of the successful "cracksman" John Handley, both of whom were apprehended, convicted, and transported about fourteen years ago. No one of equal consequence in their felonious walks has recently taken their place, or at least has been detected and brought to justice.

For some time past a series of mysterious burglaries occurred, principally in the City. Property to

the extent of 20,000*l.* at least was carried off, and not the slightest clue could be obtained of the burglars. The most experienced of the Metropolitan and City officers were employed to trace out the thieves and the property; but for a long time they could obtain no evidence strong enough to warrant them in taking suspected persons into custody. Their investigations, however, were not entirely without results. They contrived to get a tolerably reliable clue to those hands through which some of the most valuable part of the property made its way; but when they had followed the property to a certain point, the invariable result was that all further trace was lost. The officers, however, were satisfied that burglaries so cleverly planned and successfully executed were the work of one and the same hand. The skill with which the thief effected an entrance to the apparently well-secured warehouse, the judgment evinced in the selection of the time, and the soundness of the information as to the whereabouts of valuable property, were identical in all the great cases; and as nothing was ever left behind which could lead to the identification and detection of the burglar, every thing being done in a most workmanlike and masterly manner, the officers confessed themselves completely at fault.

The most expert "cracksmen," who were offered portions of the large rewards if they would "split," admitted that the robberies were not done by any of the old hands, but were the work of some new and *unknown genius*.

*Concurrently with these great City burglaries, there*

was a vast number of robberies of ready-furnished lodgings committed at the West End of the town. Not a week passed but information of two or three robberies of this kind, in which a large booty was usually carried off, was sent to the Vine-Street Station-house.

All these robberies were alike in character, and all, it was quite evident, were perpetrated by the same thief. The various descriptions given of the dress, the person, and mode of proceeding tallied in all respects. The thief was described as a young, well-looking man, attired like a substantial farmer, and having the ruddy look and rough manners of a well-to-do countryman. His plan was to drive up to lodging-houses of the superior class in a cab, pretend he had just come by railway to London on business which would keep him in Town for a few weeks, and allege as his reason for calling that he preferred furnished apartments to an hotel. He always had a large and weighty portmanteau with him in the cab; and after inspecting the apartments, and making minute inquiries about the other occupants, —if noblemen or Members of Parliament, so much the better,—he would then take the vacant rooms at once. He contrived to disarm suspicion by his frank manners and plausible statements, and when asked for a reference would tell the housekeeper that, being a stranger in London, he could only refer to his bankers in the country, displaying at the same time what appeared to be a banker's cheque-book; and then, in order to dispose of any scruples that might remain, would pay in *advance* a week or fortnight, always making liberal

allowance for extras, and, in particular, bargaining for his meals to be served on plate, and not plated articles. This plan succeeded in an endless number of instances; and it is perhaps needless to state that, after a few days' occupancy, the "country farmer" disappeared, having chosen his time so judiciously as to enable him to strip the house of its most portable valuable articles. His portmanteau was left behind, which, when opened, was found to be filled with brickbats and rubbish.

"Whall," said Inspector Baker one morning, "here's another of these cases of robbing furnished lodgings; this time it's within a stone's throw of our station—at the corner of New Burlington Street. You and Gray must take this business in hand at once. We *must* stop this sort of work; it cannot be allowed to go on any longer."

Furnished with all the information that could be collected from the various lodgings that had been visited, Whall and Gray proceeded to take their measures accordingly. They felt pretty sure that Eneas Giffard, who at that time kept a house of ill-fame in Air Street, was connected with the disposal of the produce of the burglaries. They had, however, visited and searched unavailingly the house in Air Street at unexpected times, and had followed Giffard about from place to place—his ostensible business was that of a straw-plait merchant; it was by this means he gained an entrance into different City warehouses, and gathered a fund of useful information as to the arrangements of *the establishment*—but not a particle of suspected *property could they find*.

They also kept a strict watch on a female named Hunt, who cohabited with Giffard, and who, it was reasonably surmised, confederated with him in all his transactions. The only valuable piece of information which these officers obtained related to the description of the person of this robber of ready-furnished lodgings. That description was complete; his clothes, his manner, height, red face, and remarkably-shaped hat, were all minutely described.

One morning Gray was going down Rupert Street, when two persons passed him; one he immediately recognised as a returned "lag," the other was a stranger with a very red face and a hat of a peculiar form. The thought immediately flashed on him that the hat-wearer was the man he was in search of; but having nothing certain to proceed upon, he only stared hard at the pair, who returned the look steadily, and passed on. Meeting Whall shortly afterwards, he mentioned his suspicions to him, and it was then agreed to keep a look-out in the neighbourhood for the *suspects*.

The very next day they came full upon the hat-wearer, and watched him unperceived into Pamphilon's Coffee-house, in Sherrard Street. Whall instantly ran off to the house in New Burlington Street, to fetch one of the servants to identify, if possible, the suspected party. Gray remained on the watch; but before the cab came back, the hat-wearer came out of the coffee-shop, and was about to cross the road, when Gray went up to him, and asked him if his name was not Handley. The well-dressed fellow replied roughly in the negative; but Gray at once told him he was an

officer, that he must be satisfied on certain points, and that he must therefore request him to walk in his company to New Burlington Street. The prisoner thus accosted made no objection, and they proceeded a few steps down the street, when Gray was suddenly seized, the stick which his companion carried was inserted between his legs, and he was thrown down. But the officer, being wide-awake, was as quick as his assailant: as he was falling, he fastened on him, and both came down together. While struggling in the road, the fellow contrived to pull out of his waistcoat-pocket a gold scent-bottle, and to throw it away; also to tear from his fingers a couple of diamond rings, and fling them as far as he could. The scent-bottle was recovered, and one of the rings; but not the other. At this moment the cab with Whall and the female cook from New Burlington Street turned into Sherrard Street. The woman no sooner caught sight of the person who was struggling with Gray, than she made an hysterical gesture of recognition, and fainted. The presumed thief was then put into the cab, and lodged in the Vine-Street Station-house.

Gray stopped behind to look after the "valuables" that had been thrown away; and while thus employed, one of the loose women who frequented the Haymarket came up to him, and inquired what the "cove" had done.

"Do you know any thing about him?" said Gray.

"I know he's a 'bilk,'" said she, "and that he hangs out at No. 5 Warwick Street, Charing Cross."

When Gray reached the station-house, Inspector

Baker told him his prisoner wished to see him, but had refused to give the least information as to his place of abode.

Gray went to the cell in which Handley—for it was really the man—was locked up.

"What have you got to tell me?" said Gray. "Mind, I don't ask you to confess any thing."

"All I want to know," said Handley, "is, who 'planted' you on me, and why you did not take me the day before, when you saw me with convict Jim in Rupert Street."

"I wasn't sure of *you*," said Gray; "I only felt tolerably sure of your hat."

"Hat!" said Handley. "Hah! I ought to have known"—giving his hat a kick—"that tile would tell tales. Good morning, old fellow. I haven't any thing else to say."

"Well, good morning," said Gray. "I shall have a little more to say to you after I've been to Warwick Street."

"What!" said Handley, jumping up, with an oath. "Who told you about Warwick Street? Now, then, I *know* it was a 'plant,' and that I'm regularly sold; I see all about it. But if I go, I know who shall go too. Step it to Warwick Street, and mind you look sharp after Polly Hunt's bunch of keys."

Whall and Gray, certain now of being on the right track, proceeded to No. 5 Warwick Street.

When the door was opened, they passed through the hall into a handsomely-furnished dining-room; and there, on a superb couch, they found Mrs. Hunt reclin-

ing, with a crystal basin filled with strawberries-and-cream before her, which she was feasting upon with a golden spoon.

"We are officers," said Whall, "and you must consider yourself in custody for receiving stolen goods."

The mouthful of strawberries was instantly ejected; the woman for a moment turned deadly pale, but rallied in an instant, and then made a rush at a desk which was open on the sideboard. She was stopped immediately, and secured. The noise of the proceeding brought down the occupant of the first-floor—no other than Captain Mangles, the member for Guildford, who had unwittingly taken apartments at a "fence's," with one of the cleverest cracksmen in London living on the floor above him. When informed of his predicament, the honourable member was perfectly astounded. Of course, he lost no time in shifting his quarters.

The first thing that attracted the attention of the officers was a magnificent shawl with which the woman Hunt had enveloped her person. The peculiar pattern and foreign character of the material induced them to look over the numerous hand-bill descriptions of property stolen burglariously or feloniously, and they soon lighted on one which contained an exact description of the shawl in question. The hand-bill was to the effect that a porter, employed by a foreign merchant named Pigasch, who had taken temporary store-rooms in Salisbury Square, had absconded from his situation, taking with him a box containing lace

valued at 600*l.*, and a shawl worth 300*l.* The foreign merchant had brought to this country two of these shawls, one of which had been sold to her Majesty; the other was carried off by the porter, and being too costly and too remarkable for open wear, the woman Hunt had converted it into a morning wrapper for her own use. The desk was next searched. A large quantity of gold and bank-notes was found; but the greatest prize was the discovery of a document showing that Eneas Giffard was the possessor of 7000*l.* in bank stock, and a deposit note, dated a few days back, for 700*l.* placed with the London and Westminster Bank. In addition to this, the lease of twelve houses recently purchased at Brompton, and the title-deeds of a small farm near the Star at Hampton—this was the country residence of Eneas Giffard and Mrs. Hunt, and the place whence the strawberries and cream came—were discovered. The value of the property exceeded 10,000*l.* The officers then proceeded to the top room of the house, which was used as a temporary warehouse until an opportunity occurred of disposing of the goods placed there with safety. The room was literally crammed with silks, velvets, ribbons, broadcloth, and similar property—the produce of innumerable burglaries. The drawing-room, occupied by Captain Mangles, was decorated with several costly clocks and ornaments—all stolen property; so was the dining-room. In the back room adjoining the dining-room a quantity of dirty linen was packed up, as if ready for the laundress. Whall and Gray were curious enough to examine the bundle, and their labour was well re-

warded by finding the greater part of the Brussels, Valenciennes, and other expensive qualities of lace, which had been stolen from M. Pigasch.

The next step was to visit the apartment occupied by Handley, the front room over the drawing-room. Here was a singular scene. The whole of the side of the room where the windows were placed was occupied by a smith's bench, fitted up with lathe, anvil, and vice, supplied with all sorts of files and tools used by locksmiths, and double-carpeted to deaden the sound of work. All round the room impressions in soap had been taken of the wards of different keys, under which were placed skeleton-keys manufactured from the impressions, and labelled with a minute description of the rooms or warehouses to which the keys applied. There were about eighty of these soap impressions and skeleton-keys; and, from the assistance afforded by the labels, it was afterwards found that upwards of seventy related to burglaries already perpetrated, and ten or a dozen to burglaries to be perpetrated as soon as the time for action was ripe. It turned out that Handley was an exceedingly clever mechanic, and that he brought his skill into profitable operation in his burglarious vocation.

He had been an apprentice to a saddler at the West End of the town; he had taught himself the art of making skeleton-keys, picklocks, and the ordinary tools used by burglars, and had constructed without help a variety of sets, all of which betokened skill and invention of no ordinary character. It was now clear how *it happened* that the police had been unable to trace

out either burglaries or property. Handley made all his own tools, drew all his own plans of premises to be robbed, "worked" by himself, and kept himself only in communication with Giffard, because he was the readiest means of disposing of the produce of the robberies. If the produce of the executed burglary was "heavy goods," as silks, velvets, or broadcloths were termed, the property was conveyed direct to Warwick Street and there safely warehoused; if jewelry, plate, watches, and suchlike portable valuable articles, it was also taken to Warwick Street and manipulated upon by Handley himself. From rings the precious stones would be removed, and the shanks melted—a crucible being always at hand for this kind of work. The gold cases of watches would be also fused into a bar; and the same process would take place with brooches, chains, and other articles, the designs of which were peculiar and likely to lead to detection. In this burglar's workshop there were also files and instruments for removing the crests and initials from forks, spoons, and other silver plate; in short, there was every thing that the most accomplished and experienced cracksmen could desire to enable him to render identification of valuable property impossible.

While busy with these extraordinary discoveries, a knock came to the door. The constables were in the passage in a moment. The servant who opened the door—she was the mother of the woman Hunt, it was afterwards ascertained—was not allowed time to give any signal to the person who sought admission; consequently when Giffard—for it was he himself—walked

into the hall, he found, to his utter dismay, he was in the custody of the police. When taken into the dining-room and searched, about 300*l.* worth of loose diamonds was found in his pocket-book. These were the produce of a robbery at a jeweller's in Cheapside; and Giffard, who had just received them from Handley, had been out that day trying to find a customer for them. The man and woman were removed to the station-house, and so was the property. For some days after the capture of the offenders was known, and the amount and nature of the property found in the house described, the station was like a fair.

The superintendent directed that one of the largest rooms should be appropriated as a show-room, and that parties who had been robbed should be invited to come and inspect the goods. This announcement brought crowds of victims. The value of the miscellaneous goods taken from the house in Warwick Street was between 4000*l.* and 5000*l.*, and the amount identified was upwards of 3000*l.*

The police were enabled to get up complete evidence in no fewer than twenty-two cases of receiving stolen goods against Giffard, and seventeen cases of burglary and robbing ready-furnished lodgings against Handley. There were, at least, as many more cases against each prisoner where the moral evidence was sufficiently strong, but the legal evidence too incomplete to warrant an indictment.

As some proof of the large amount of property *carried off*, I will just enumerate a few of the cases of robbery: *M. Pigasch*, lace and shawl, valued at 800*l.*;

Mr. Middleton, jeweller, Cheapside, jewelry and plate, valued at 1500*l.*; Messrs. Griffin, Ironmonger Lane, ribbons, &c., 700*l.*; Messrs. Gent and Miller, Bread Street, silks, some hundreds of pounds; Messrs. Crick, Henrietta Street, silk velvets, 400*l.* The diamonds found on Giffard were part of the robbery at Mr. Middleton's.

It need hardly be stated that all three prisoners were tried, convicted, and transported for life. A singular fate attended the two male prisoners: they were both wrecked on the passage out, in different vessels, and drowned. The last that was heard of the woman Hunt was that she had contrived to make her escape from Port Natal—how she got there it is impossible to say; that she made her way safely to New York, and, being a very handsome, clever woman, became the wife of a leading tradesman in the Broadway.

With respect to the large amount of property left by the culprits, it is equally impossible to trace its ultimate destination. The securities and title-deeds were made over to the children of the woman Hunt and the relatives of Giffard, but it is very doubtful whether they ever benefited a farthing by them. The gold and money got into the hands of the Sheriffs of London, in addition to the remaining part of the goods not owned, amounting to about 1600*l.* The other portion was, of course, given up to the parties who could identify it.

A curious question arose out of this case. The Dean of Westminster, Dr. Ireland, claimed, in virtue of *an old charter*, the right of inheriting the property

of all felons convicted in his district. An action was brought by him against the Sheriffs of London, which terminated in his favour.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### FOREIGN SHOPLIFTERS.

AMONG the most remarkable of the foreign shoplifters who periodically visited the metropolis some years ago, were Eugene and Caroline Lemaire. The mode in which they effected their depredations on jewellers and silk-merchants, principally at the West End, the large amount of the valuables they purloined, and the length of time they carried on their robberies without being either suspected or detected, form a remarkable chapter in Old-Bailey annals.

Eugene Lemaire was, unquestionably, the most dexterous "pincher"—that is, stealer of rings, watches, and expensive articles of jewelry—of his day. His sister Caroline was equally adroit in the same line; but her *forte* lay in carrying off whole pieces of silk goods, velvets, and similar portable valuables that could be concealed beneath a large opera wrapper, which she invariably wore when out in her carriage—for she kept a handsome brougham—doing her "morning shopping." One of the leading West-End establishments had suffered to such an extent, that an application was made to the Marlborough Police-Court by the senior partner for an experienced officer.

*Clements* was directed to place himself at the ser-

vice of the firm ; and accordingly the following morning he went to the establishment—the name of which I suppress, for reasons which will be soon understood—and was ushered into the private counting-house, where both senior and junior partner were sitting. The junior partner was not quite pleased at what had been done by his senior, as he feared that exposure would injure the business in the estimation of the wealthy and aristocratic customers whose carriages daily crowded the street.

The system of plunder had, however, assumed such proportions, principally in the jewelry and silk departments, that his objections were overruled, and the officer was permitted to take what steps he thought most suitable to come at the thief.

Clements laid his plan of operation before the firm, and it was approved of. He required a fortnight to make the investigation, and stipulated to have daily admittance to the establishment under such a disguise as would disarm suspicion. All this was acceded to. Clements, it was arranged, was to make his appearance the next day in the character of a buyer from America, who was not only about to purchase largely from the firm, but who was desirous of acquiring an insight into the system of business and general details of a concern that employed upwards of one hundred assistants, all of whom were obliged punctually at one o'clock to make their appearance in white neckcloth, in black dress-coat, and with silk stockings and pumps.

Clements, having been, in a business way, intro-

duced to the buyers of the various departments, was left to follow out his investigation according to the light of the great experience which he was known to possess in such affairs. On the third morning he walked into the counting-house, and found both partners there.

"Well, Mr. Clements, have you succeeded in gaining any clue to the party who still continues to plunder us?" asked the head of the firm; "for it was only yesterday that two pieces of rich satin were missed from the silk department."

"I think I have," said Clements.

"That is good news indeed. And are you prepared with sufficient evidence to justify you in taking the thief into custody?"

"I am."

"Then perhaps you will be good enough to communicate what you have learned to us."

"The thief," replied the officer, "or rather the thieves, for there are two of them, are at this moment in the establishment. If you will come with me, I think I can point them out."

The two partners and the officer went out of the counting-house, and walked through the various departments, as if in friendly chat. As they passed the silk counter, the officer directed his eyes significantly to a foreign lady, young, beautiful, and magnificently dressed, who was examining some expensive silks, and who was being waited upon by one of the principal assistants with great assiduity.

*The trio returned to the counting-house.*

"The foreign lady is the thief," said the officer; "and the young gentleman with the diamond pin in his cravat, who is serving her, is her accomplice."

"Oh, indeed!" said the junior partner, with great asperity. "I must tell you plainly, your judgment is quite at fault here. That lady is one of our best customers; she is under the protection of Lord —, and her purchases are paid for regularly by check from the nobleman himself."

"I know that," said Clements. "I know more than that. She has a villa at East Sheen; she is visited twice a week by your assistant with the diamond pin; and, if a search-warrant is taken out, I do not hesitate to say you will find plenty of proof that she has been robbing you almost daily. The reason she has not been found out before is, because the young fellow who always serves her is a confederate."

"There, again, Mr. Clements," said the junior angrily, "you are completely mistaken. That young gentleman, sir, is my nephew, and will shortly be one of the partners in this firm."

"It may be so," replied Clements; "still the facts are as I have stated. You employed me to trace out the thieves; I have done so; and if you want to carry the matter further, I am in a condition to prove all I have stated."

"I beg you will refrain from such unjustifiable remarks in my presence," said the junior partner, with increased anger. "My nephew's integrity is beyond suspicion, and I must therefore wish you good morning. *I never went willingly into this inquiry, and am*

not surprised at the failure of the plan. Your expenses, according to agreement, shall be paid."

Clements took his leave; and the next day he received a check for twenty guineas, with thanks for his trouble, and an intimation that his further services would not be required.

"Then you were really out in your guess?" said I to Clements, when he was relating to me the circumstance some years afterwards.

"I am not quite sure of that," replied he, with a meaning look; "but this I am sure of, that the following week the villa at Sheen was sold, and the nephew was never afterwards seen at the establishment."

About a year after this, a great number of robberies of silks and jewelry were reported at the Vine-Street Station-house. The thieves were described as foreigners—a young man and a young woman. The description of the female thief tallied exactly with that of the carriage-lady who had visited the establishment so successfully where Clements had been professionally employed.

Information was one morning brought to the court that a foreigner had just been detected in stealing a diamond ring, value fifty guineas, from Mr. Moss, a jeweller in Ludgate Hill. Clements proceeded to the shop, and found a young foreigner in custody. A hasty search of his person was made for the ring, but nothing was discovered. A cab was called, and the prisoner was put into it; and during the ride to *Marlborough-Street Police-Court* he was closely watched *by the officer, to prevent him from getting rid of any*

stolen article that might perhaps make evidence against him. When arrived at the court, Wilks, the then gaoler, thought it expedient to put the foreigner into a cell by himself; and suspecting that the ring might possibly be found on a closer scrutiny, he compelled the prisoner to strip, and undergo another and more complete search. No ring was found; the gaoler still was not satisfied. Knowing something of the legerdemain dexterity possessed by the superior class of thieves, he made the prisoner stand up and extend his arms against the wall, so as to prevent him from passing the ring about, should he really be in possession of it. This did not produce the ring. The gaoler, however, continued his search; and noticing that the prisoner had an unusual quantity of black curly hair, he thrust his hands through it, and out fell the ring. The prisoner, while being searched, had actually passed the ring from hand to hand, lodging it in different situations with such rapidity as to elude even practised eyes, and at last planted it in his hair, where it would have remained concealed had it not been for the acumen of the gaoler.

The prisoner was Eugene Lemaire, commonly known by the *sobriquet* of the "pincher." The next step was to capture the female. Clements, who felt pretty certain he was on the right scent, immediately posted off to the senior partner who had employed him in the previous investigation, and made him acquainted with the apprehension of Eugene Lemaire, the brother. The senior partner told him that such an individual, who had passed himself off as an attaché of the French em-

bassy, had frequently honoured the establishment with his presence, and had made considerable purchases ; but that since his visits began a great many articles of jewelry, such as diamond rings, bracelets, and watches, had been missed. The lady, however, had not "shop-ped" there since the *dénouement* which I have related. Her address, however, was known. She lived in Hertford Street, in great style, and kept what is termed a "reception-house," to which only a select party of noblemen, amongst whom was a noble lord then connected with the Ministry, was admitted.

Clements immediately requested an interview in a private room with the sitting magistrate, Mr. Chambers, for the purpose of asking for a search-warrant, and also a warrant to apprehend Caroline Lemaire. This was a matter of some delicacy. The magistrate was not unacquainted with the high influence which this woman had at command. She was the *chère amie* of a noble lord then holding high position in the Government, and who had, of course, great influence with the Home Office. A false step would be productive of inconvenience too serious to be encountered except on the clearest justification.

The magistrate, however, was perfectly independent, as all metropolitan magistrates are ; and, on hearing what Clements had to say, immediately granted the warrants. The officer, accompanied by Schofield, at once proceeded to Hertford Street. The lady was at home, and was just preparing to sit down to dinner *with a well-known marquis, whose establishment in Paris was remarkable for its costly appointments.* Of

course the appearance of the officers put an immediate stop to the enjoyment of the little dinner-party. The officers produced their authority, and commenced their search. In a very short time they had accumulated valuables of all kinds sufficient to fill several large trunks. The value of the property thus recovered was enormous.

The lady, in her elegant dinner-toilette, was put into a cab, brought to the court, and placed at the bar, with her accomplice. Neither of the prisoners betrayed the least emotion. The lady stood like a tragedy-queen at the bar, displaying an air of supreme indifference. The brother also exhibited an amount of *nonchalance*—considering that transportation stared him in the face—quite unaccountable. The number of charges brought against both was perfectly unparalleled; and the most singular part of the affair was, that two-thirds of the sufferers did not know they had been robbed until the articles found in the female prisoner's house were produced and identified by them.

I shall not go into the voluminous evidence, the numerous remands, and the ultimate committal of the prisoners on at least a dozen clear cases. In due course the trial came on at the Old Bailey; both were convicted, and sentenced to seven years' transportation.

"I could have made a rare good thing by this affair," said Clements, "had I listened to the offers that were made to me to 'stall off' the principal witnesses. The prisoners, especially the lady, had friends among the nob, and every thing was done that was

possible to get them off; but there were one or two ugly customers among the prosecutors, and it was in vain to hope that the evidence would break down in their cases. I could not make out for some time how it was that the prisoners appeared to have so little care about the result of the proceedings against them; but I had a suspicion."

"And what was that suspicion?" said I.

"I cannot quite inform you," said Clements; "but this I can swear to, that three days after conviction I met both prisoners walking at large about the streets of London."

"Do you mean to say," said I, "that, after being sentenced to seven years' transportation, they were allowed to make their escape from prison?"

"I mean to say nothing of the sort," replied Clements; "I only say that they had good friends at court. They *knew* too much; and the noble lord who was the lady's friend is supposed to have exercised his influence at the Home Office on their behalf. But the fact is just as I have stated; they were at liberty in a few days, and both in Paris, not a pin the worse, a week after conviction."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

SAM FURZEMAN, THE NIGHT-CONSTABLE OF ST.

GILES'S.

ONE of the most remarkable men of his day was Sam Furzeman, the night-constable and street-keeper of St. Giles's. The district in which Sam had to discharge his dangerous duties was one of the worst in the metropolis. It was peculiarly the "Irish district," and the constant scene of those terrific outrages and brawls which seem to be the atmosphere in which the lower order of Irish at that time—I speak of nearly forty years ago—preferred to exist. The establishment of the police has done much to purify and pacify the various Irish localities; still there is enough yet left, wherever this turbulent race congregates—and the Irish seldom completely amalgamate with people amongst whom they may cast their lot—to show what they must have been when there was no sufficient force conveniently at hand to overawe and overpower rioters.

Every Monday morning the avenues of Marlborough-Street Police-Court were crowded by men and women, with the unmistakable characteristics of the Irish race imprinted indelibly on their countenances and dress, waiting to give evidence for or against, according to clanship, no matter on which side the truth was, in cases of assault where some of the ringleaders had been captured. The black eyes, broken heads, torn garments, *and half-savage* and drunken condition both of men

and women, betokened the semi-barbarian breed, the frightful character of the "rows" in which they had been recently engaged, and the ferocity of the combatants. It had come at last to be the regular practice for the denizens of one Irish locality to assemble on Sunday mornings, and to proceed to another locality, there to make an attack with sticks, brickbats, pokers, and any weapon that could be laid hold of, upon every one they encountered, and thus to get up a general "scrimmage." The undying feud between Munster and Connaught men—the constant brawls and fights of Buckridge Street against Peter Street, and of Calmell Buildings against every thing and every body—grew to such a pitch at last, that the magistrates were wholly at a loss to deal with the evil. The street-keepers, street-constables, and officers were constantly engaged in quelling these rows, or executing warrants against offenders wherever they could be found. The service of these warrants was always one of great danger. The Irish throughout London invariably made common cause with their countrymen; and many an officer and constable, when in the execution of his duty, has been treated with such brutality as to endanger limb, and frequently life.

Fortunately, however, for the peace of the district, Sam Furzeman was appointed to the post of night-constable and street-keeper of St. Giles's. A man better qualified in all respects for the office could not have been found in all London. Sam Furzeman, as many *will yet* recollect, was noted for his steady courage, his *bodily strength*, and his contempt for the clannish

ferocity of the denizens of Irish localities. He was about six feet high, muscular to a remarkable degree, and equally well able to use fists and feet. Whenever an Irish row occurred, he was instantly among the combatants. Without a moment's hesitation he would seize one of the most powerful of the fighting ruffians, drag him away by main strength—one hand on the collar of his prisoner, and with the other knocking down right and left the savages who attempted rescue. Such was his promptitude and prowess, that he became a perfect terror to those who had hitherto set all the lawful authorities, whose duty it was to keep the peace, at defiance. The execution of assault-warrants became easy and safe; the regular officers had only to procure the assistance of Sam, who knew pretty well where to find the culprit, and who was up to every "dodge" that could be practised to conceal the offender; and woe to that individual who, after receiving a message that Sam Furzeman "wanted him," would dare to disobey the summons.

I had heard a good deal about the strange scenes that occurred at the houses frequented by the labouring Irish, and especially on the occasion of "raffles,"—got up sometimes to raise a fund to set up some newcomer, sometimes to assist in releasing a countryman whom justice had overtaken; and I resolved to become an eye-witness of the truth of the circumstances detailed to me by the street-constables. I visited, one evening, the Coalyard in St. Giles's, in which was a public-house, the head-quarters of the St. Giles's labouring Irish, *where I was told a raffle was to come off that evening.*

I went into a large room lighted by two gas-lamps, and furnished with strong tables and benches. The fire-irons were chained to the fireplace. This, it appeared, was a necessary precaution, as on the least approach to a row—and not one moment was safe against an impromptu quarrel—the first things to which a rush was made were the poker and tongs, to be used with a recklessness that made it truly astonishing murder was not constantly committed. The room was already nearly full: men in their working dress, principally Irishmen, strong, sensual, and sinister-looking; and women, hard-featured and brawny-limbed,—all engaged in drinking, singing, screeching, and vociferating in their gibberish, creating a din surpassing any thing that Babel could have furnished.

The raffle went on pretty well until a big beetle-browed fellow, with a Munster visage, came in and shouldered a passage to a table already crowded, but at which he forced his way into a place. Scowling looks were directed to him from all sides; muttered oaths in Irish were heard: but all were disregarded. The fellow without ceremony laid hold of the quart pot out of which the party on whom he had intruded were drinking beer, and defiantly emptied it at a draught. A roar as if so many human devils had broken loose was raised in all parts of the room. Instantly the gas was turned off, and a fearful scene of riot took place. The Munster man, now laying hold of the quart pot, struck right and left, prostrating all who came within the sweep of his powerful arm; and several soon fell, covered with hideous gashes on the skull. I tried to

get away, but found two gigantic Irishmen had placed their backs against the door, and with their iron-shod shoes kicked savagely at every one who attempted to quit the place. My position was any thing but a pleasant one, especially as the fighting became general and indiscriminate. Some got under the tables, some under the benches, to protect themselves. Luckily a big fellow close to me received a blow from one of the legs of the table, which had been broken off to serve as a shillelagh; and he fell against me senseless, shielding me with his huge body, which I took care to keep between myself and danger. This scene continued for about ten minutes in all its fury, when in a minute it became hushed as if by magic. I heard the name of "Sam Furzeman" whispered, and in another minute the door was driven in; and the two fellows hurled into the middle of the floor. A tall man walked right into the room, and fixing his eyes on the fellow who had occasioned the disturbance, called out, in a strong, resolute voice:

"Come out, Mick Cassidy."

"I'd like to see anny dozen of you thry to take me out," said the fellow, raising the quart pot menacingly.

The words were hardly out of his lips before the weapon was twisted from his grasp, and he was seized by the neck, and actually torn over benches and tables by Furzeman; for it was the redoubtable St. Giles's constable who had come on the scene of action. The Irishman was a powerful fellow, and struggled desperately. But he was like a child in the hands of his captor; and though he bit, kicked, and fought with desperation,

clinging to every thing he could lay hands on, he never succeeded in delaying for a moment his onward progress to the watch-house, which was situated at one end of the Coalyard.

I had taken advantage of the entrance of Furzeman to make my exit from the tap-room, well satisfied at having escaped with a whole skin. As the watch-house—there were no station-houses at that time—was close at hand, I followed the mob, and being known to some of the watchmen, gained admission without difficulty. After the furious struggle in which Furzeman had been engaged, I expected to see him in a state of great heat and discomposure. The reverse was the fact. He took his seat in the night-constable's chair, without the least appearance of having just been engaged in a desperate personal affray, coolly and deliberately, and told the watch-house keeper in attendance to put Cassidy at the bar. The Irishman was forced into the dock, thoroughly subdued, as was evident by his casting most beseeching and deprecatory looks at the night-constable.

"This is the third time this week, Cassidy, you have been here," said Furzeman. "I'll take care to-morrow, when you get before the 'beak,' that you sha'n't play up your games for some months to come."

"Don't be hard on me this wanst, yer hanner," said the ruffian; "it was only the dhrop of drink in me."

"You are always drunk at somebody's expense," said Furzeman. "Put up the witnesses."

"Plaze your honour," said one of the crowd,

"there's nobody to the fore. Jack Connor's tuk to the hospital wid his eye smashed; Bill Looney is getting his head strapped up; and Mistriss Boyle ain't come to her sinses yet, which Mick Cassidy knocked out on her wid the quart pot."

"I'll be on my oath I didn't strike nobody," said Cassidy; "that murthering blaggard, Jack Connor, kilt me firsh't wid the quart pot."

"I seen Jack Connor do it, and I'll oath it, yer honor," shouted half a dozen voices.

"I know all about it," replied Furzeman, with a contemptuous look at the crowd; "you'd take your oath either way for a rotten potato; but that sha'n't help you, Cassidy, this time, for I'll go against you myself for biting my hand, you Irish brute." Furzeman here held up his hand, and showed an ugly wound inflicted by the teeth of the brute at the bar.

By this time I had had quite enough of personal experience of Irish rows. Thenceforward I confined myself to reporting them, dressing up the facts in such a way as to hide the hideous features, and to bring out the comic points of which they were susceptible.

Two years after this scene I saw a tall, gaunt figure sitting at the Marlborough Head, in front of the bar, apparently in the last stage of consumption or some deadly wasting disease. I looked hard at him.

"What!" said I, "can this be Sam Furzeman?"

"All that's left of him," said Sam, shaking his head; "and there won't be even that much in another month."

*I learnt afterwards that about six months previously*

Furzeman was called to quell an Irish row in Peter Street between some Irish haymakers, Protestants and Papists. With his usual fearlessness, he laid hold of the ringleader, and was dragging him off, when his foot slipped, and he fell. Instantly half a dozen reapers jumped on him, and drove the heels of their heavy shoes into his back repeatedly before he could regain his footing.

Furzeman, whose temper was never put out of the way except by cowardly brutality, was thoroughly roused; he inflicted a fearful punishment on his assailants with the head of his brass staff, which then was surmounted with a crown. At one blow he split one fellow's ear in two, and with a second drove every front tooth down another brute's throat. This was his last adventure in the Irish locality. He had received mortal internal injury from the kicks and jumps on his body. He wasted away from that day, and died in about three weeks after I saw him. On opening his body one of his kidneys was found to be fearfully ruptured.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

A "SPECIAL" INVITATION TO MOOR PARK. THE  
"KING OF THE LINKMEN."

THERE is an old proverb that says no good exists without its corresponding evil. How far its truth was illustrated in the following little narrative, intelligent *readers shall determine* for themselves. The rise of *gas companies* proved the downfall of linkmen. Those

once indispensable attendants at the Opera and West-End *soirées* are now all but matters of history. What the introduction of gas failed to accomplish, the intervention of the new police effected. Linkmen gradually disappeared; their functions were superseded by the police; and the last of the fraternity, Paddy Carey, the "King of the Linkmen," years ago retired from "the profession," leaving nothing for posterity to remember him by but the reputation of his ready repartee, and a professional renown that has never since been equalled. "Paddy Carey," however, was not his real name; it was the cognomen conferred upon him by his noble patrons, and thus it became the name he was best known by among Opera-goers. James Leary was his patronymic, to which, after finally closing his public duties and retiring to his family estate in Murphy Square, wherever that might be, he modestly attached the regal O.

Paddy Carey used to pride himself on the great and original improvements he introduced into his luminous profession. He would proudly claim the honour of being the inventive genius who substituted the "lamp" for the halfpenny link then in common vogue; and also of having first set the fashion of exhibiting to his aristocratic nocturnal patrons a "bit of flane shirt and a pair of whole brogues," in place of the bare legs and ragged costume which distinguished the "dirty bogtrotters from Ballymadoodle," as he contemptuously described his rival countrymen linkmen. By the exercise of his humorous audacity he contrived to obtain many a coin after all the ruck of

the noisy and officious brood of link-flourishers had abandoned the chance as hopeless; but what he valued himself most upon was at having once extracted a sixpence, the only instance on record, from Lord Mont-eagle.

It was on the occasion when, as Mr. Spring Rice, his lordship had been appointed to the high office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"I'd tried hard at him for six or seven sasons," narrated Paddy, "hoping to see the colour of his money, but divil a scurrick was I able to screw out ov him. One night I seen him come out of the French ambassador's, looking about for his carriage. 'Spring Rice, me boy,' says I, taking off my hat as bould as brass; 'now you've got the Treasury, wid all the nice little pickings, you'll be able to stand a twopenny link, and can stick the price down to the nation in yer nixt Budget.' Be dad if he didn't burst into a fit of laughing, and pitched a tanner into me hat. Maybe I didn't spit on the bit of silver for luck, and melt it into whisky at 'Stunning Joe Banks's,' in Buckridge Street."

But the rise of Paddy Carey's fame and fortune had its origin in this honourable incident.

"The Duke of Beaufort was my best friend," said he one day to me, when loquaciously disposed; "there was always a shilling and 'How do you do, Paddy?' whenever he clapped his eyes on me at the Opera. One night, just when he pitched a bob into my hat, I heard *something jingle*. Be the hole in my coat, when I tuk *my hat under the lamp*, what should I see sparkling

like the stars but an illigant diamond ring. The next morning I on wid me Sunday coat, and aff I wint to Beaufort House, and sint up my rispicts to his grace, wid a hope that he would be plased at finding his ring safe and sound agin. Be jabers, down came the grand laced flunkie wid his grace's compliments and thanks, and a goulden sovereign for me honesty. The next night—it was about a wake or so aafter—when I saw his grace, he called me to him. 'Paddy,' says he, 'take that, and wear it as a mark of the estame in which meself and friends hould ye.' And what do you think it was? Why, a grand silver opera-badge, with a fine inscription engraved in big letters on it—'Presented to James Leary by several noblemen and gentlemen for his good conduct, his honesty, and faithful discharge of his duties as principal linkman at her Majesty's Theatre.' Wasn't I a proud man! Maybe I didn't thank his grace in good sound Irish for his noble ginerosity; and perhaps I didn't wear me silver opera-badge at every grand party. Proud was I ov it, for I found that his grace the Duke had axed the Marquis of Waterford, Earl Waldegrave, Lord George Beresford, Lord William Beresford, and a power of grate gintlemen, to subscribe to me badge; and every one dropped his tin like rale thrumps as they were. But powers be good to me! his grace always brought me luck, and the biggest piece was when he got me an invitation from the grate Marquis of Westminster himself to Moor Park."

"How did that happen?" I inquired.

"Well," says Paddy, "the eldest son of the noble

marquis was after coming of age, and all the world, except poor Pat, was axed to Moor Park. Be dad, says I to meself, but I'll ax his grace to get lave to me to go down wid me link, and call up the carriages. When I spoke to his grace about it, I tuk me oath, if the marquis would on'y have me, I'd cut a reg'lar shine wid a clane shirt and my grand opera-badger. His grace at first shook his head; but I was not to be stalled off; so I said I'd promise, on the word of an Irishman, to powder me wig if I got a lave. 'Powder your wig!' says his grace, laughing a bit; *that*, I think, will decide the matter. I'll certainly mention what you propose to do to the marquis.' And, be me sowl, so he did; and so I got a card to go down to Moor Park, wid an order for rations on the steward. Och! but it was the best day's work I ever did; and some fine day I'll tell you all about it."

Before entering upon this remarkable event in Mr. O'Leary's life, I may as well give his own version of the cause that impelled him towards the linkman's profession.

"When I firsht cum to London, I engaged meself in the mortar-mixing line, bekase I'd tried my hand at 'going up the Jacob' (carrying a hod of mortar or bricks up the ladder), but got a bad tumble one day; and this lamed me, so that I could only take a handy job now and again. I got 'put on' at Holford House, in the Ragency Park, which was then being built; and whin it was being roofed, down came Mr. Holford to look how the work went on. The labourers—*and there was a power of 'em*—says to me, 'Pat,

you've the gift of the gab; jist ax his hanner to let us drink good luck to the new roof.' Well, I thought no harm about it, and I watches to put in a word; and jist as Mr. Holford was going out wid the foreman, I pulled a leg, and out wid it about what the workmen wished.

" 'By all means,' said he to the foreman; 'let the men have a barrel of beer among them.'

" 'I'll be sure and take care your hanner's wishes are attended to,' said the foreman, and bows the gentleman into his carriage.

" Mr. Holford's carriage had no sooner drove away than he calls out to the cash-keeper, 'Barnes! here; take this fellow'—maning me—'to the pay-table; give him his wages, and turn him off the premises.' Be me sowl, I was bundled out like a mangy dog, wid his tail betwixt his legs; and as I wint home I couldn't help thinking what a pretty kettle ov fish I'd made of me morning's work. 'Kape up your pecker, Paddy,' says I to meself; 'maybe this will be the makin' ov yer fortin;' and bedad I wasn't far out, for I met a Munster boy who tould me to buy a half-penny link, and try me hand at lighting gentlefolks to their carriages. I took the hint, and in less than a wake I was at the top ov the tree. But now I'll tell you about me divarsions at Moor Park.

" The firsht thing to think about," said Paddy, in continuation of the narrative of his visit to Moor Park, "was how to get down there wid me lame leg. Aff I wint to the Dials to borry Jack Callaghan's moke.

" 'Sure I'd lend yer the baste,' says he; 'but he's

down along wid Barney, me son, at Bow Common, doing a bit av brick work.'

"I got to Bow, and, afther a hard bargain be-  
toot Barney and me, I got the lave of his donkey and  
trap for three days. There was the devil's own job to  
catch the brute. Barney wid his wooden leg, and me  
wid me lame leg, were more 'an two blessed hours at  
it chasing the ugly baste afore we could get the bridle  
over his neck. At last the donkey was put to the  
trap, and I got home to me ould hooman in time to see  
her soak the starch into the collars of me two rale  
Irish-linen shirts, so that they'd stick up over me two  
ears as stiff as bullock's horns. Then me Sunday tail-  
coat and waistcoat wid brass buttons, and me grand  
silver opera-badge, were all packed up in a bag; and  
so aff I set, me an' a boy from the Dials to help wid the  
donkey, and a thrifle of silver in me pocket. Be dad,  
sir, the devil was in the ould donkey: we were five  
hours goin' five miles—the boy leathering the donkey's  
jacket wid the saft end of an ould broom-handle all  
the blessed way.

"'Come out o' that,' says I. 'We will be pulled  
by the Society for promotin' Cruelty to Animals; but  
we can't go back now; so we must take the marrow-  
bone stage, like other gentlemen.'

"And, be me sowl, we had to walk every step to  
Moor Park; and to 'fork out' for turnpikes until me  
heart was broken intirely, and the devil a ha'penny  
was left to pay the last one, except me grand silver  
opera-badge, which I left wid the turnpike man for  
*the loan of half-a-crown.*

"At last we got to the park; and then all me thrubbles were over. Be me oath, sir, I got rations for meself and donkey, and a bed in one of the stables for meself and boy; and máybe we wasn't in clover. Oeh! sir, the donkey didn't know half his good luck; and the baste began to think he was somebody else, bekase you see he was for the firsht time in his life lodged in a fine stable, and had his bags blown out wid hay and oats three times a day. And maybe me and the boy didn't faste on the fat of the land, nayther; lashins of twenty-year ould ale, able to make a cat spake, and no end of slivers of cowl'd bafe, roast and boiled, that would have made a bishop's teeth wather. Thim's the very laste of the good things we had to our own cheek; and as for Paddy, och! be the hole in me coat, I was axed into the lower-servants' hall at night to tip 'em an Irish stave; and me company was so well liked, that I never come away but wid me skinful of fine ould red port and goulden sherry, let alone a drain or two of rale French brandy, to kape the cowl'd aff me stomach.

"Well, yer honner, the next day, you may belave me, I come out as strong as mustard. There was me clane shirt; and maybe I didn't forget to let the grate folks see it wasn't a dickey, for I'd a good bit pulled out at the wristband, and the collar wint right up over me ears. An' didn't I lay on the powther, nayther; me head and me whiskers held half a peck of bread-flour; and, taking me whole turn-out, I'll go bail but the Lord Chancellor of England never cut a *greater shine*.

"But me grand opera-badge was wantin', and I was onasy about it; for if the marquis should come to the fore and miss it, bejabers, thinks I, he'll say I have taken him in; and that cut me up mightily. Well, as there was nix for me to do in the way of me profession till the evening, all I'd to think about was to strut over the park, show me shapes, and make me bow to the grand company as they come out of their carriages. Be jabers, wasn't some av 'em glad to see me!

"'Is that you, Paddy?'

"'Large as life, me lord,' says I.

"'Didn't know a bit av you, Misther Paddy, in your fashionable costume.'

"'Maybe not, yer ladyship,' says I; 'an' you're not the only one; for his honner the Dutch ambassador tuk me for his aqual, and gave me an illigant low bow as he passed.'

"'Powers above! here comes the Duke of Beaufort, wid a sight of fine ladies—what will I do now?' says I.

"'You've kept your word about the powther like a man, Paddy,' says his grace, looking all over me wid the greatest admerashin; 'but where's the grand silver opera-badge?'

"'Whisht, your grace,' says I; 'be aisy wid me saycret, and if you'll let me spake a private word, I'll tell no lie about it.'

"His grace heard what I'd to say about the turnpike man, and, like a noble gentleman as he was, he called one of his grooms, gave him five shillings, and tould him to ride aff an' bring back the grand silver opera-badge.

"Before it was time for the gentry to be stirring, his grace the Duke of Beaufort and the noble marquis, wid a posse of fine ladies, came over the park, as luck would have it, close to where I was taking a stroll. Plaz'd and proud was I when his grace brought the ladies to see me wid me grand opera-badge and me illigant turn-out. There was the beautiful Lady Ailesbury, and Lady Blackwood, and Lady Seymour. Och, you should have seen the eyes they made at me, and the duke laughing and joking all the time wid 'em. I made a bow, and took off me hat.

"'Oh, we all know Mr. Paddy Carey right well,' says Lady Blackwood.

"'And maybe,' says I, 'it's Paddy Carey that knows yer ladyship and yer beautiful sister better. It's the likes av me that have shown ye to yer carriages often enough to make a bet that I'll point out which owns the natest leg and foot ov the pair.'

"Och, sir, the ladies laughed, and the duke laughed, and offered to take me bet; but the ladies ran away, and the duke and the marquis went after them. I'll go bail there never was such a calling-up of the carriages before or since at Moor Park. I was the boy to do the trick handsomely, and, be my sowl, me ould hat and me pockets were soon filled with half-crowns and shilling pieces. Och, there never was sitch a day for Paddy before nor since."

"I suppose," said I, "you took proper care of your riches when you got them?"

"Ah," said Paddy, shaking his head, "there was a bit of bad luck for me at last, and this is how it came

about: When I got back to the ould hooman, I turned me silver into gould, and put four sovereigns into a bag, which, for safety, I shoved under the coals in me coal-box. Well, down came Barney to settle for the donkey, and brought two or three boys to have a drop of whisky out of the money. Bad luck to me if I didn't forget me bag whin the devils of boys made up a fire to bile the wather to mix the punch wid. When I came to recollect me money the next morning, it was gone; and Barney, the big blaggard, brought me the bag, which he said he picked out of the ashes; but the devil a skurrick was in it. You may take your oath that Barney never tasted a drop av whisky at my expense after that. I'd Bible-oath he'd the money—though he offered to take oaths as high as his head that he never sot eyes on it—bekase a month afterwards he bought a fine new costermonger's barrow, and sot up on his own hook in the ginger-pop line."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THIEVES' HOUSES.

It is even now occasionally a work of danger for the police, organised as they are, to apprehend thieves of the more desperate class. Before the police force was established, the task of caption was one of enormous peril. The thieves of past days had their head-quarters in various localities,—east, west, north, and south,—all of which were well known to the detective officers; and it was only officers of the particular district who

could, with any chance of success or safety, make a capture in special localities. At the East End of the town, the Black Horse in Wentworth Street was the most noted; in the Borough, the King's Head in Kent Street; and the Red Lion, in the Mint, were sacred to all but known burglars. Dover Street and Friar Street, Blackfriars Road, had their special houses of resort. Duck Lane, Westminster, was pretty well filled with "thieves' cribs." Drury Lane had Ben Lewis's; Soho, the Cock; St. James's, the Crown, and half a dozen others in and about the Haymarket.

But many of these places have disappeared; others have changed tenants, and taken up new and purified characters. It is not, however, of the exploits of the old constables that I intend to speak just now.

The establishment of the police force has done much to mitigate the ruffianism and the exclusivism of thieves. Better organised, composed of younger and stronger men, they soon proved themselves more than a match for any combination, even of the most determined and desperate characters. But the new police did not gain the mastery without fearful and deadly struggles. The public know little or nothing of the numbers that have been kicked and beaten to death in the public streets and thieves' resorts, or mutilated horribly for life. I could without difficulty count up a score of young, able-bodied constables who have been destroyed by sheer violence within the period of a very few years after the police was established. A frightful history might be written of the brutalities committed on them, in Irish districts particularly; but desperate

thieves and Irish ruffians did not always escape punishment. The constables were selected for duty in particular localities on account of their pluck, strength, and determination; and the result has proved that roughs of all kinds have found their masters; and localities that no stranger, even in broad daylight, dared to venture into, may now be traversed at all hours in the night with the same security that one may walk down Regent Street at noonday. But it was not only by down-right brute force that the police gained the upper hand; it required a good deal of address, and not a little humoring of the rules tacitly established among the thieves themselves. For instance, at a recognised house of resort for thieves, a constable would have little difficulty in taking into custody a culprit "on suspicion," provided he did not venture into their penetralia or show his staff. Woe to the policeman who should be so incautious or so foolhardy as to disregard this latter condition! It may be asked, how it happened that public-houses known as the resort of thieves were not reported to the licensing magistrates, and proceedings taken against the landlords with the view of getting their licenses suspended. The reason simply is, that it was found best to wink at such houses, because in case of need the police knew where to go in order to apprehend their man. If the *known* houses were suppressed, the thieves would resort to *unknown* houses; and the difficulties of the police would only be multiplied, without the *list of thieves' houses* being either diminished or *suppressed*.

The latest act of violent resistance to the police which I recollect happened a few years ago at the Coak in New Street, on an occasion when Police-constable Dupierre of the C division, a remarkably active detective and thief-taker, went with Police-sergeant Gray to apprehend a burglar for breaking into a gambling-house in Air Street kept by Ben Lewis. The burglary occurred, of course, at night. The burglar, who evidently knew the premises well,—perhaps was *en rapport* with one of the servants of the establishment,—had contrived to break into the house through the cellar, and to carry off a tolerable booty in plate and other portable valuables. The constable on duty—a new hand, but otherwise a sharp fellow—was immediately summoned to the station-house, and questioned. As a matter of course, he was to consider himself “suspended” until the burglar was in custody. He gave a tolerably minute account of every suspicious character that had passed through his beat during the night. His attention had been particularly attracted to a short, stout man, who had passed him twice, the last time with a bag under his arm.

“Was it a green-baize bag?” asked Dupierre, who volunteered his help to get his brother-constable out of trouble.

“It was,” replied the constable.

“Had the man dark curly hair?”

“He had.”

“Did he limp slightly?”

“He did.”

“Then,” said Dupierre, “it was Tiny Mason who

did the job, and I'll pick him up at the Cock to-night. Will you go with me, Gray?"

The constable assented, and at night they both went to the Cock. The room sacred to thieves and their ladies was on the first-floor. It was known as "Towzer's Club;" and it was here that Tiny Mason spent his evenings and his dishonest gains.

Before going up-stairs, Gray cautioned the constable not to enter the room, but to call Tiny Mason out, being sure the summons would be obeyed without resistance. The constable Dupierre disregarded this wise advice. He threw open the door and walked in; Gray followed, but kept close to the door, anticipating mischief. The room was crowded,—about fifty well-known thieves and prostitutes were there assembled in the height of their coarse jollity,—singing and drinking going on merrily. Dupierre soon singled out Tiny Mason, who was at a table about the centre of the room. Dupierre beckoned to him.

"Who the —— are you?" said Mason.

"Come out, Tiny; I want you for the job in Air Street," said the constable.

"Where's your warrant?" said Mason doggedly.

"Here," replied Dupierre, producing his staff.

He had better have attempted to swallow it. In an instant the gas was put out; the constable was hemmed in, and though a strong man and a desperate fighter, his strength and resolution were of no avail whatever.

He was knocked down instantly, and fearfully maltreated. Some well-natured thief, as he rushed to the door, whispered to Gray:

"Cut your lucky, my boy, or you'll drop in for it next."

Gray saw at once it was hopeless to attempt to assist his brother-constable. The room was in darkness, and the thieves were making their escape through the windows and by the door, Tiny Mason among the foremost. Gray did all that lay in his power; he rushed to the window and called for assistance. Several constables quickly made their appearance, but the gaol-birds had flown; there was nobody in the room but the constable Dupierre, who was lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood, a senseless mass of bruises and wounds. The injuries the constable sustained kept him under the doctor's hands for a week. As soon as he was able to go on duty, his first act was to look out for Tiny Mason. Grown wiser by the lesson he had just received, he took care, as soon as he had come upon the trail, to pay respect to the regulations which the thieves expected to be observed. Tiny Mason, when properly summoned, gave himself up to the officer without the least hesitation, and soon afterwards suffered transportation for his offence.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

FRED KING, THE SWELL CRACKSMAN.

"ABOUT four years ago," Clements commenced, "a burglary was committed at a fellmonger's at Stratford. There were three of 'em in it; one was Fred King. *This was about the time when he first started in the*

cracksman line, and the only case, except one, in which he 'worked' in company. One of the burglars was a discharged servant of the tanner's, who knew all about his master's habits, and of course was also well acquainted with the plan of his premises. It was the custom of the owner to clear out his manufactured stock at the end of the year, and to get in a full supply of raw hides for tanning about the same time. The tanner was known on these occasions to keep a large sum of money in the iron safe, to pay for the hides as they were brought in. It was arranged among the gang that Fred King should go down to Stratford in a light cart, pretend that he came to look over the stock to see if any thing suited him, make himself acquainted with the premises and the best way of getting into the counting-house, in which the iron safe where the cash was deposited was placed. The other two were to wait at a beer-shop not far off, and at midnight, when a signal was given, go forward and lend a hand to their comrade.

"The plan agreed upon, as I was afterwards told by Fred, was this: He was to conceal himself in a shed where a large quantity of raw hides was stored,—this shed being next to the counting-house, to which access from it might be gained without much difficulty. The other two were to have a cart in waiting hard by, and give the signal by throwing something at a small window in the shed, to let Fred know they were there, waiting to be let in.

*"Fred told me it was the first bit of hanging business he had ever undertaken, and he felt rather 'shaky';*

but he did not let his pals know it. Indeed, it was a very serious business, because then burglary was a sure hanging matter; and it was also well known that the old tanner kept fire-arms ready, that he always went round after dusk to see that the place was secured, and that he would not hesitate to shoot any one who was found concealed on the premises.

"Fred told me that he contrived to slip unperceived into the shed, and to get under a heap of fresh raw hides, the stink from which nearly choked him. It was a sharp frost, and a bitter cold December night, and he remained crouching in his place of concealment until he was pretty well benumbed. He said he felt precious glad when he heard the old fellow come round, just look into the shed, and then lock it up. But about midnight a large dog, which was let loose after the workmen had gone, began barking and howling furiously; probably the animal heard the two fellows with the cart, or perhaps it might have smelt the visitor in the shed. Fred heard the house-door open, and the master call to the dog; but the master, not being satisfied, went round the premises again. In the course of his rounds he came again to the shed, and opened it; upon which the dog rushed in, and renewed his furious barking. Fred thought it was all up with him, for the old gentleman suddenly jumped on the pile of skins under which he was, and shut up the little window above him, which had been left open. Fred said he durstn't stir, or venture even to draw a full breath, although the jagged horn belonging to one of the hides went right into his cheek every time the leather-met-

chant trod upon the pile to get the window fastened. At last the window was shut, and the master being apparently satisfied that all was right, called off the dog, but with some difficulty, and locked up the place again.

"Fred went on to say he heard his 'pals' about an hour afterwards throw gravel at the window, and give a smothered whistle, the signal agreed upon; but his terror was indescribable when he found that he was totally unable to move, or to make the least use of his limbs. The fact was, the cold had paralysed him for the time. However, after a series of desperate efforts, he did contrive to work off the skins, to shake himself free, and to help his comrades into the premises. Once in, the rest was easy. One of them quieted the dog by a bit of 'thieves' liver;' the other two got into the counting-house, broke open the safe, and took away about 200*l.* in notes, and 50*l.* or 60*l.* in sovereigns."

"Well, and how were the burglars discovered?" I inquired.

"I traced one of the notes," said Clements, "to the chap who had been formerly a servant; and, of course, as we say when we don't intend to mention names, 'from information I received'—I can't say more—I had all three in custody about a week afterwards. The old servant then offered to 'split;' but his master, who had been very kind to him, was so thoroughly savage, that he would not allow him to turn king's evidence; so I just got a hint dropped to Fred of what his 'pal' wanted to do, and then Fred, on *condition of the case being made 'light' against him, confessed all he knew about it, and got us the notes*

back. His two pals were hanged; and though he got off the capital charge, he had a twelvemonth for some minor offence. I found a lot of 'tools' at his lodgings, and took possession of them."

Shortly afterwards, a more melancholy *souvenir*, in the shape of the rope that hanged Fred King, was added to the officer's collection. The way this conviction was brought about contained quite a little romance, and made a great public sensation at the time. The premises of Mr. Newton, a timber-merchant at the East End of the town, were broken into, and a robbery committed, accompanied by acts of great violence towards the master and the female portion of his family. The thieves not only took all the money and plate they could lay their hands on, but compelled the wife and daughter to give up their watches, rings, ear-rings, and jewelry which they then wore.

"Mr. Newton," began Lea, who told me the catastrophe, "was one of the most inflexible men I ever met with. He was like a blood-hound in following up the trail of the burglars. He never lost sight of his determination, night or day, to hang them all. Three of them, one after the other, he traced out. He got up the evidence against them at no end of trouble and at an immense expense; and, one after the other he saw, evidently to his satisfaction, three of them swing at the Old Bailey. The fourth man baffled him for more than two years. At last, one morning, to my great surprise, who should I see put to the bar, charged with being one of the gang who broke into Mr. Newton's house; but Fred King! The evidence

appeared to me to be weak; but the magistrate, being pressed hard by the counsel, sent the case to a jury. The burglars, it appeared, all wore crape masks, and this rendered identification by face or feature difficult. Fred King, when placed at the bar, looked the picture of gentlemanlike innocence. He had engaged Mr. Adolphus as his counsel; against him were Mr. Alley and Mr. Clarkson. The evidence was entirely circumstantial; and though the case evidently made a strong impression on the jury, the counsel for Fred hardly condescended to ask the witnesses a question. When the case was closed, I caught Fred's eye, and he smiled with the greatest confidence.

"I felt pretty sure that he had no doubt the judge would order him to be acquitted, and the more so when Mr. Adolphus got up, and, in a short, snappish address to the jury, told them the only answer he should give to the evidence was to prove an *alibi*. The counsel then told the usher to call Miss Jane Crawter. A very handsomely-dressed young lady was brought into court and put into the witness-box. She was what you would call a regular 'stunner.' I never saw a finer young creature in my life. She walked up the steps as proud as a peacock. She looked just as if she had stepped out of her carriage, and had always been accustomed to have a footman waiting on her. In fact, she had a rare spice of pride, her father being one of the richest men in Whitechapel. To the surprise of every one, she avowed, without hesitation or the least appearance of shame, that on the night of the burglary Fred King was with her; that he had come

to her father's house, without his knowledge, at ten o'clock; that he remained with her all night, and went away about five in the morning. On cross-examination she did not deny that she had frequently admitted Fred King clandestinely; that one of the housemaids knew of the intrigue; and that she could bring proof, if further proof were required, that Fred King passed the night when the burglary was committed with her.

"Every body felt astonishment and, at the same time, compassion at the humiliating position of a young lady, the daughter of a most respectable tradesman, who had been highly educated, and whose appearance would have done honour to a nobleman's drawing-room. It was clear that, at the expense of her good name and character, she had come forward to save her lover's life. She was not aware of his true vocation when she first made his acquaintance at a ball at the Freemason's Tavern. Under a promise of marriage, she had surrendered her virtue. She had, however, braved all for his sake. She was nothing but a trump; but she hanged him in spite of all her sacrifices.

"I have said that Mr. Alley was particularly sharp in his cross-examination. She stood it without flinching. She never wavered in her statement, and pertinaciously stuck to the date—it all depended on that—which she said she quite well remembered; and further, she said that, being accustomed to keep a diary, she had, on the morning when he quitted her, registered his visit. The diary was called for, and immediately produced. The entry was simply, 'Dear Fred came at 11, and left

at 5. He gave me a pair of gold ear-rings.' When the ear-rings were read out aloud, I saw Mr. Newton rise up, look at Miss Crawter, and whisper something to the counsel. I also saw Fred give a start, look at the young lady sharply, and then turn as white as a ghost.

"Mr. Alley continued his cross-examination, asking the young lady if the ear-rings she then wore were the ear-rings given to her by the prisoner on the night in question. She answered unhesitatingly that they were. She was requested to hand them to the counsel for inspection. She did so, and they were immediately given to Mr. Newton, who instantly rose, and, addressing the judge, said :

" 'My lord, I am prepared to swear that these ear-rings were forcibly taken from my daughter's ears on the night of the robbery.'

"The young lady turned round, and, catching a sight of the ghastly countenance of her lover, gave one long, loud shriek, and fainted right off. I needn't tell you the court was in a pretty state of confusion for some time. The trial went on, and Mr. Newton's daughter was called to give evidence. She not only swore to the ear-rings, but was able to recollect that she noticed that the man who took them out of her ears had a joint of one of his fingers missing. Fred's left hand was examined, and there, sure enough, was a missing joint. The business after this was soon settled; the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, the judge '*black capped*' him, and he was hanged the next week."

"What became of the young-lady witness?" said I.

"I did hear," replied Lea, "that a gentleman who was in court at the time fell in love with her, and made her an offer; that she married him, and had a large family, who are all now doing well in another part of the world."

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## CHAPTER XXV.

HONESTY IS (NOT ALWAYS) THE BEST POLICY.

THE firm of Morrison, Dillon, and Co., of Fore Street, haberdashers and wholesale silk and cloth merchants, is, I presume, known to every body. The rise and progress of this firm form a peculiar chapter in the history of City enterprise; but it is not upon that topic that I propose to dilate. The magnitude of its business transactions for the year, nearly half a century ago, was unrivalled among wholesale houses; the number of clerks, shopmen (for the retail shop had not then been abandoned), warehousemen, and porters formed quite a little community of itself, more especially as all the establishment—except, perhaps, one or two heads of departments—were boarded and lodged under the same roof. It was currently reported in City circles that the firm "turned over," as it is termed among traders, upwards of a million sterling in the course of the year. The receipts and payments daily were, of course, very large; and as the transactions were exceedingly numerous, on account of the vast number of their town and country customers, a very wide field was open for the practice of ingenious dishonesty.

The counting-house department was under the superintendence of Mr. John Dillon, then the head-clerk; and though he established a remarkably clever system of checks, to detect either dishonesty or error, and to make both impossible, that system was not sufficiently complete to prevent an extensive and peculiar plan of embezzlement from being carried on for a length of time, which was only discovered by a mere accident.

A young Scotchman, named William Watt, having been engaged as clerk, his quickness and general capacity gained him promotion, until he was placed in a position where part of his duties was to assist in settling accounts and balancing them in the ledger. He filled this confidential post for about two years, and then he quitted his situation to take the management of the counting-house department of Messrs. Ellis and Co., wholesale silk-mercers, Ludgate Hill, without, as the journals say of an acquitted *suspect*, a stain on his character. Some time after Watt left Messrs. Morrison's, a customer had occasion for a copy of an account which had been previously settled by Watt. A duplicate of the account was furnished; but, on being compared with the customer's books, it was found that some of the items differed from the original invoices, and that the money given credit for was much less than the money actually paid.

The ledger was carefully looked over; and where difference of figures existed, it was discovered that *erasures had been skilfully made, and the figures altered. The day-books, from which the ledger was posted, were*

then examined; they, too, had been altered, but not so cleverly as to baffle detection. It was soon discovered that a system of fraud had been perpetrated, the extent of which it was almost impossible to determine. The multifarious transactions in the day-books were examined by a regular accountant, and frauds to the extent of upwards of 2000*l.* detected. These frauds were committed this way: A customer, for example, would bring his invoice for the purpose of paying the amount. The invoice and ledger having been "agreed," the amount would be paid either by cheque or money. The party settling the account (Watt, of course) would enter in the cash-book the full amount received, if by cheque, because then fraud was impossible if the cheque was crossed by the amount paid; but if in money, 10*l.*, 20*l.*, or even more, would be entered short. In order to make the cash received and the amount in the ledger tally, Watt used to erase the figures of the ledger-clerk, and substitute others, so as to make cash received, as entered in the cash-book, and amount of account balance. To prevent summary detection, Watt would make similar erasures in the day-books, from which the various sums were posted into the ledger; and as these day-books had been previously called over with the ledger by a special clerk, it was next to impossible, unless suspicion became awakened, to detect the imposition.

As soon as the fact of embezzlement was placed beyond doubt, Mr. Dillon applied to the Mansion House, and engaged the services of John Forester. *Mr. Dillon* proceeded with the officer to Messrs. *Ellis*

and Co., and, against the opinion of the officer, went into the counting-house to put a question or two to Watt. The counting-house was at the back of the premises, which extended into Creed Lane, and could only be approached by a kind of well-staircase. Mr. Dillon had hardly exchanged a dozen words with Watt, before the culprit at once divined that his frauds were detected. Without a moment's hesitation, he rushed out of the counting-house, threw himself over the railings of the staircase, reached the warehouse-door before the officer could possibly stop him, and ran out of the premises without coat or hat. The start he had thus gained enabled him to elude the officer completely. Pursuit was made; but as the road Watt had gone could not immediately be discovered, the chase was given up.

Mr. Dillon was obliged to leave the matter wholly to the experience of Forester, then in the zenith of his fame as a determined and clever detective. Forester ascertained that Watt, while living with Messrs. Morrison's, was accustomed to visit a young woman at Greenwich,—that, in fact, he kept this young woman there, who passed as his wife, in excellent style; and it was by the help of this fact he hoped so to manage matters as to make it the means of leading eventually to the discovery of the whereabouts of Watt. Over this young woman he kept a strict watch. A trusty man was engaged, and placed in lodgings opposite to her, whose sole business was to keep her in sight—to follow her wherever she went, and from time to time to transmit information to Forester of her movements.

Nothing particular took place for more than a month. One morning early the door of the house where this young woman lived was seen to open, and the young woman herself, dressed as if for travelling, with a carpet-bag in her hand, issued forth.

The "nose," as an officer's spy is politely termed, was on her trail instantly; he followed her to London, to the Scotch wharf below the Tower, and saw her on board one of the fast-sailing Leith smacks, which formed at that time the ordinary mode of transit between London and Edinburgh, steamboats not then having come into common use. The "nose" immediately went to Forester's lodgings, and gave him the recent particulars he had obtained.

Forester, who was already provided with a warrant, slipped a shirt or two and his pistols into a travelling-bag, called a hackney-coach, and in an hour's time had entered on board the Leith smack as fellow-passenger with the young woman. In about four days the smack arrived at Leith. The young woman got out, and breakfasted at one of the pie-and-porter shops in the vicinity of the docks. After paying the bill, she took a fly up the Leith Walk to Edinburgh, a distance of about a mile or so. Forester followed close on her track; and when the fly stopped, he contrived to get out of his own conveyance, and to continue the chase unperceived. The young woman had evidently received previous instructions to take every precaution to elude pursuit, in case she should be watched. From eleven o'clock until about two o'clock, this young woman *went up one street and down another. She passed up*

the Calton Hill, went as far as Arthur's Seat, back again to Edinburgh through the West Bow, up Castle Hill, and made small purchases at various shops, until the patience of the officer began to wax rather scrimp. Having made her way to the flesh-market, she went to the corner shop, and offered one of the boys sixpence to show her the road to Broughton Place. The boy readily undertook the mission; and the young woman, thoroughly persuaded that her "doublings" had set all kind of pursuit at defiance, accompanied the lad without any misgiving. When arrived at Broughton Place,—a quiet, genteel street in the retired part of the city,—she took out a pocket-handkerchief, unfolded it, and shook it twice, as if for an ordinary purpose. From one of the doorways a figure dressed in sailor's clothes immediately emerged, and came directly towards the young woman.

Forester, who had nothing more to guide him than the printed description of Watt, was at first doubtful whether the well-got-up sailor and Watt were identical; for the metamorphosis was so complete that it might have baffled the scrutiny of even Watt's nearest friends, and any body except one of the wariest officers in London. Watt had allowed whiskers and beard to grow until his face was one mass of black hair; his complexion was coloured dark by some kind of pigment, and his garments were those of a foreign sailor; so that he might have passed muster with good judges for the mate of one of the Portuguese vessels then *lying in the Leith Roads*. The height and bulk of the man, however, tallied with the printed description,

and there were other general indications which induced Forester to think that this "sailor" was the very person he was in search of.

He instantly stepped up to the couple, who were in close confab, and, touching the sailor on the shoulder, said, "Mr. Watt, I want you." "I'm not Mr. Watt," said the sailor hastily. "My name is Smith." "Very well," said Forester, "then you will be good enough to come with me at once, Mr. Smith. I have a warrant for your apprehension." "What for? on what charge?" said the sailor, evidently much agitated. "For robbing your late employers, Messrs. Morrison and Co., of Fore Street, of 2000*l*." The officer had his eye on his man, and seeing his hand approaching his side-pocket, he instantly closed with him, and a desperate up-and-down struggle ensued. Watt—for it was really himself—was a powerful young man, much bigger than the officer; but the officer had been accustomed to deal with rough customers, regardless of disparity of size and strength, and the contest was soon terminated by the wrists of Watt being secured with a pair of London-made handcuffs.

The officer and his prisoner very soon found themselves in London again; and Watt was examined at the Mansion House, and fully committed to Newgate. The trial came on in due course, and in consequence of the magnitude of the robbery, and the daring ingenuity with which it was carried out, the court passed a heavy sentence—I believe fourteen years' transportation. There was found at the Bank of England, to *Watt's credit*, a sum of money amounting to nearly

2000*l.*, which was, no doubt, the produce of his system of pillage,—for he came from Scotland very poor, and his salary would not have enabled him to save any thing worth consideration. This money, we believe, was recovered by the prosecuting firm.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of this story is its result. The sentence of transportation turned out to be the most fortunate circumstance that could possibly have happened to Watt. Being a person of ability, in a few years he contrived to emancipate himself from the convict's position, and to become the editor of one of the Sydney papers. In this paper he took up the convict question; he argued it ably; he rose to great weight and influence in the colony, and in a few years became one of its most important, wealthy, and influential residents.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY.

I HAVE already introduced Tom Craig to the notice of my readers. He was appointed, as I have stated, to the Romford district; and being a strong, active young fellow, of very dark complexion (one dip more would have made him a nigger), and a regular Lothario among the country wenches, a good many of his adventures turned upon his intrigues and successes in the amatory line. One adventure, which he related piecemeal, with some reluctance, struck us as not a little remarkable. His successful encounter with *Romford Bob* at the Chequers Inn led to his frequent

calls on the landlady, or rather on her niece, who, being on a visit, lent a helping hand in the bar. The niece, a handsome, lively young lass, whose vocation was that of lady's-maid, and who was then on the look-out for a new situation, very soon took a fancy to Tom. They were then too poor to marry; they agreed to postpone the ceremony to better times; but they became imprudently intimate, and the consequences of their intimacy were in a short time so obvious, that Tom found himself one morning suddenly summoned by the district beadle to make his appearance before the nearest magistrate, there to enter into sureties to bear the parish harmless from any expenses that might be incurred.

"As the petty sessions," said Craig, "were not for a month, I was obliged to go before the nearest magistrate, an old West-Indian planter, a baronet, who lived at a magnificent house not a hundred miles from Kelvedon. The old gentleman, I was told, had married a young wife, in the hope of having an heir to his large estates; but five years passed before the prospect of a family occurred. When I got to the Hall, I was ordered into the library, as Sir Thomas had the gout, and the depositions could only be taken there. I went into the library, and there was the old gentleman and his young wife, a regular screamer, who looked at me as if she would look through me, and then got up and walked out of the room like a tragedy-queen. My business was soon over, and I went back to duty. The landlady's niece set off to London, and I heard nothing about her beyond a letter which stated

that a distant relative had adopted the child, and that I need give myself no further trouble about its future maintenance.

“Well, nothing particular happened for about two or three months, when I heard grand doings were to take place at the Hall—I was still on the Romford district—at the christening of a young heir, who, it seemed, had made his appearance. All the great folks round about were invited; there was to be open house for three days; and as it was likely some of the farm-lads would get drunk and troublesome, the steward, with whom I had knocked up an acquaintance, invited me to come and keep the roughs in order. I went to the Hall, and found every thing prepared just as if the Prince of Wales was to be christened. The christening was to take place in the evening, in the drawing-room, and no one was to be admitted but the nobs and the nurses; the servants, except one or two of the uppers, were ordered not to show themselves in the room. As I was a bit of a favourite with the steward, over a tankard of twenty-year-old ale he told me a good deal about what was going on in the house. He mentioned that whispers were afloat not very much to the credit of his lady; he said that the groom of the chambers, a West Indian, was believed to have been rather too much of a favourite with his mistress, and that the young heir was remarkably dark-skinned. He further mentioned that this groom had been suddenly dismissed about nine months ago, in consequence of his lady having lost her diamond keeper, which was *worth more than 100*l.**, and it was thought he knew

something about it. The ring was an heir-loom, the steward said, and had six large diamonds in it.

"The steward, who got a little mellow with the good wine he broached, became more communicative in his cups. He said he did not believe a word of the scandal about the groom and his mistress; but there was another story which he was not wholly disposed to discredit. When the lady's-maid came to her place, about six months previously, she appeared to be *enceinte*. It was curious that the announcement of the lady herself being in the same state was only then made. What was considered to be a sudden freak on the part of the lady was, that a month before her accouchement she went down somewhere by the sea-side, and there she stopped until her confinement was over. No one accompanied her but the lady's-maid; and it was whispered that the clergyman was only induced to register the birth of the child by the bribe of a large fee. Mistress and maid returned, both equally slender; the lady looking as rosy as a milkmaid, the servant as pale as a parsnip.

"'Between you and me and the post,' said the steward, putting his finger to his nose, 'I don't believe the child is master's. I believe it is the lady's-maid's; and I believe some hanky-panky tricks will come to light some day, for the heir-at-law has already been making inquiries and examining people, that he may be able to prove that an imposition has been practised, in order to keep him out of the large estates; but he won't get much out of the maid, for she's a downright close-mouthed, artful card.'

"After another bottle or two of wine, I prevailed on

the steward to let me have a look at the christening party. I managed to get into the drawing-room, and place myself behind one of the curtains, so that I could see every thing without being seen myself. It was a very 'spicy' affair. The baby was all lace and ribbon. Sir Thomas and his lady, proud as peacocks, were on a sofa at the further end; and the bishop was with them. The christening was just over, and the head-nurse and lady's-maid were handing about the baby and showing him off to the company. I managed to get a peep, and certainly the steward's notion about dark complexions appeared to me to be quite correct. But what fairly staggered me was, that when the lady's-maid turned round, I discovered she was my old flame, the landlady's niece. I think she must have caught sight of my 'phizmahogany;' for she started, and almost ran out of the room through the boudoir. In a minute afterwards the steward came to me in a fright, and dragged me out, telling me to be off, as some one had told his lady that a stranger was in the room, and she was in a dreadful rage about it. A week after this I was riding along the Romford Road, chewing over in my mind a good many things, and this among the number, when a travelling carriage-and-four passed me. I managed to catch one glimpse of the nurse and baby; but the nurse threw herself back, and would not take the least notice of me. I soon found out that this was Sir Thomas's carriage; that he (or rather his lady) had taken a sudden freak; that the *Hall* was to be sold; and that the family had gone on *the Continent*, to live there for good."

"Did you ever hear any thing more of the landlady's niece?"

"Never set eyes on her again. I was soon afterwards drafted to Marlborough-Street Police-Court, and twenty years passed over without any thing happening to bring this bit of business to my mind. I got married by that time, and had a family about me; so I didn't care to rake up old stories. The only thing that brought it up again was this: I should think it was at least twenty years after that, when some of us officers were ordered down to one of the midland counties to look after the swell mob, in case they should nibble some of the plate at a junketing that was to take place in consequence of the heir to some great estates having come to his majority. We were well received by the young gentleman, who was a fast young chap, and had got through no end of money even before he came into his property; which, by the by, he had nearly lost, I was told, as his legitimacy had been disputed by the old gentleman's nephew."

"I remember him," said Clements, nodding, "and recollect telling you how much he was like you in face and manner; he'd got your gallus big nose, and when he opened his mouth his head was half off."

"The festivities lasted several days," continued Craig, "and the young swell generally had one of us after dinner to chat to him. On the last evening he sent for me into the dining-room, and made me sit down and take wine. The room was full of pictures; *one of them* over the fireplace was that of a lady, who

I immediately felt certain was the grand lady I had seen at the Hall. I could not keep my eyes off the picture, and this attracted the notice of the young gentleman at last.

"'You seem rather taken with that picture,' said he; 'have you ever seen the original?'"

"'I don't know,' said I; 'but I think I have.'"

"'That's the portrait of my mother,' said he.

"I looked at him steadily, and I'll be hanged if I didn't think, with Clements, that I saw my very self in his features.

"'That picture,' said I, 'brings up some queer recollections, when I was doing duty as one of the Bow-Street mounted, at Romford.'"

"'Come,' said he, 'I like to hear out-of-the-way stories; fill your glass and begin.'"

"I then told him the story of my adventure with the landlady's niece; and when I mentioned that the lady's-maid had written to me to say that her baby had been adopted by a lady, I noticed that he turned quite pale, and appeared as if he was ready to drop off the chair. However, he said nothing; but telling me to help myself to wine, got up and left the room. The next morning the steward sent for us, and having paid us all our expenses, told us that we were not wanted any more; so we packed up our traps and came away. But," said Craig, "it has often come over me that if the lady in the picture could have talked, she might have told me something about the lady who *adopted* my dark-complexioned little boy."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE HAWSTEAD-HALL BURGLARY.

"It does not appear to be such personally dangerous work, that of taking fellows into custody for capital felonies, as it used to be," was the remark I made to Goddard one evening, when we were assembled in the Marlborough-Head snuggery, chatting over old times.

"They don't *hang* quite so often as they used to do," replied Goddard; "so it is hardly worth while to resist. Besides, a chap pretty well knows it's of no use; for if he gets away to-day, he will be grabbed to-morrow, and resistance to an officer is sure to increase the punishment on conviction. The stiffest job I had in my time—and I've had some pretty stiff ones—was taking Dick Poacher for the Hawstead-Hall job."

"Ah!" said Schofield, "I was in that. Didn't the sweat run off both of us, like peas! While you were tackling Dick, I was keeping off the navvies with my pistols."

"Tell the particulars," said I, "and don't be bashful in speaking of your own prowess; for I have heard you were nothing but a 'good one' to go in whenever a little rough-and-tumble business was to be done."

"Well, it's rather a long yarn, and a long time ago; but what I forget old Scho. will recollect. The rummest part of the business was the way the case turned up. It was a country job, and only came to us by the queerest accident. Let's see; I had some business in Scotland, about which I will tell you another

time, and on my way home I went to Aberdeen to see a relation of mine. When I got to Aberdeen, I was told of a clever robbery which had just taken place, and informed that the foreigner who committed it had got clean off with the 'swag,' which was worth 400*l*. The way he went to work was not unlike the Rundell and Bridge great diamond swindle, and I should say the Spaniard who did it 'took the idea' from that business. My relative having put me on to this job, I learned that this was the way it was done :

"The Spaniard called at Thomson's, one of the leading watchmakers and jewellers in the city, and stating that he was about to ship a quantity of English watches and jewelry to the Continent, requested to look over the stock to see if any thing would suit. The shopkeeper had a very large stock. The foreigner was, no doubt, wide-awake about that; and when the gold watches, chains, and diamond rings were pulled out, the foreign merchant found them so very much to his liking that he promised to call in a day or two and make a selection. One morning the foreigner, who had evidently watched the shopkeeper out, again made his appearance, and telling the shopman he had come to make his purchases, looked out gold watches and jewelry to the value of upwards of 400*l*. He ordered an invoice to be made out at once, and was very particular about having the goods properly described, so that, as he said, there should be no difficulty with the duty at the foreign custom-house. The invoice was *presented to him*; he produced what appeared to be a *huge roll of bank-notes*, and paid down 40*l*. as a de-

posit, stating that he would hand over the balance in the evening, when the goods were brought to him at his hotel. The foreigner then pulled out of his pocket a pasteboard box, and requested the shopman to pack the valuables in it. The shopman did as requested. The foreigner then asked him to tie it round with some red tape, which he also took from his pocket. The civil shopman complied.

“‘Now,’ said the Spaniard, ‘to make sartain dat no-pody sal open de box, I vil put von littel seal on de tape.

“The shopman went to the back-shop for a light, and returning with it, he placed seals on various portions of the tape, not forgetting, at the solicitation of his customer, to put on plenty of wax. The foreigner was very particular in his directions for the goods not to be sent until eight o'clock to the hotel, as he was going, he said, round the city to make other purchases, and it was uncertain about his reaching his hotel before the evening. The foreigner went away; and soon afterwards the shopkeeper entered, and was informed by his shopman of the excellent order he had just executed, on which a deposit of 40*l.* had been paid, with the certainty of a check for 360*l.* in the evening. The shopkeeper, who was quite as much pleased as his shopman, undertook himself to see the goods safely delivered into the hands of such a capital ready-money customer. At eight o'clock he was punctually at the hotel, but, to his great surprise, learned that no one of the name given to his shopman was there, and that no foreigner had visited at the hotel for months past.

“*The shopkeeper at first conjectured that his shop-*

man had misunderstood the name of the hotel ; but a suspicion flashing all at once across his mind, he tore off the tape, opened the box, and found a valuable collection of flint-stones wrapped up carefully in cotton wool. Frantic at his loss and the stale nature of the deception, he rushed back to his shop, and made the robbery known.

“It was clear how the robbery had been effected. The foreigner had prepared two boxes exactly similar in outward appearance. He had contrived in the way mentioned to induce the shopman to leave the front shop for a moment, in order to get a light to ignite the sealing-wax, and during that momentary absence had made the exchange of the boxes. The foreigner had also gained a start of ten hours by his plan of not having the box sent to the hotel before eight in the evening ; therefore immediate pursuit was hopeless.

“The shopkeeper asked me what he had better do. I told him to keep cool and quiet about the business, and I would see if I could not manage to get upon some trace of the property. The shopkeeper put the job in my hands ; and as I felt pretty sure the foreigner would make his way to London—and the property too—I took care when I came home to have handbills printed, and privately circulated among the jewellers, pawnbrokers, fences, and other parties who would be likely to be customers for these kind of valuables. I heard nothing about the business for some months, until a little affair took me in the City. I will just *state what that little affair was*, because it will serve *to show how one thing sometimes leads to another.*

Madame Vestris and her particular friend 'Handsome Jack' came to the office to give this information: that on the previous evening her footman had taken a purse from the carriage containing 20*l.* in 5*l.* bank-notes, and had absconded with it. When the name of the footman was stated, I recollected something about him which induced me to believe he would most likely be found in the neighbourhood of Farringdon Market, or rather the place where the market now is. I went accordingly to make some inquiries in that direction, and when there, it crossed my mind to ask at a pawnbroker's shop hard by, where all the swell thieves took their plunder, whether any thing had turned up about the Aberdeen job. I saw the pawnbroker, and told him what I came about. He appeared struck with an idea, and calling to one of his assistants, he asked a few questions, and then inquired if I had a bill with a description of the stolen property about me. I produced one, and on looking over his books he found that a good many of the watches were in his possession, and that the person who had pledged them months ago—thinking, no doubt, pursuit had blown over—had, the day before, called to give notice that he would take the whole of the property out of pledge the following day. Sure enough the foreigner did come according to promise, and his astonishment was very great when he found himself in custody on a charge of felony, after having remained quite unmolested for three or four months. I need not say any thing more about this job, further than that I afterwards took him down to Aberdeen and got him identified and convicted.

The best part of the business was, that I succeeded in getting back 200*l.* or 300*l.* worth of the property. However, I must now go back to my Vestris business.

"I went to the market tap, and there was my man in the very act of changing one of the stolen five-pound notes. While I was securing him, a big coarse fellow, in a countryman's dress, came up to me.

"'You be a constable, eh?' said he, in broad 'Zummerzetshire.'

"'What is it, friend?' said I.

"'Mebbee, I could put ee up to zummut a darned zight better than that there little job you been about, if you'd zay as you'd act any ways like a mon.'

"'I'll act like a man to any one that acts like a man to me; that's all I can say.'

"'Well, I can put ee on a hundred-pun job. Here,' said he, pulling out one of the hand-bills offering 100*l.* reward for the apprehension of the ruffians concerned in a most daring burglary committed at Hawstead Hall, near Tattersall. 'Dick Poacher was at the head of the gang, and I know,' said he, 'where-about Dick Poacher works; and he's the last on 'em that ain't scragged.'

"'Well,' I said, 'meet me at Marlborough-Street Police-Court this evening, and we'll talk over the business; but I must first lock up my man, and then I'll be ready for you.'

"In the evening," resumed Goddard, "I got back to the court; and there I found my navvy walking up *and down* the street, swearing and ranting to himself *like a madman*. I was told by Schofield that he had

come straight from the public-house where I met with him to the court, and had made out such a story that it led to his introduction to Mr. Dyer, the magistrate, to whom he repeated his tale. The affair, which many people yet living will recollect, was this :

“A gang of men, with faces blackened, one night suddenly presented themselves at Hawstead Hall, near Tattersall, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Elsey ; and having first tied up the men-servants in the stables, broke into the house, and, pitching the young ladies and female domestics into the cellars, proceeded to ransack the rooms ; one of the burglars, pistol in hand, keeping guard over the lady and gentleman, and compelling them to point out where the money and valuables were kept. The burglars completely gutted the place ; and after securing the plunder, leisurely regaled themselves with the contents of the larder and wine-cellar until break of day, when they went off. They had the start of all pursuit by many hours, because every body belonging to the Hall was gagged and otherwise secured, so that no one could give an alarm, the situation of the family being only discovered by some one calling at the Hall in the course of the day and finding out the state of the matters. The burglars had carried off property, in money, jewelry, and plate, estimated to be worth 400*l.* or 500*l.*

“Of course, such a daring business created an immense sensation throughout the kingdom. The county constables were called into consultation ; magistrates came forward to investigate ; and rewards were immediately offered by Government for the cap-

ture of the burglars, or for information likely to lead to their identification. The only description and particulars that the frightened inmates could give were, that there were four men; that they were unusually tall and strong, and rough in speech; that they did not speak the dialect of the county; and that one of them was very much knock-kneed. Following up this scanty clue, the constables managed to find out that four men answering the description of the four burglars had been at various beer-shops on the road to the Hall, a few miles away, drinking, smoking, and quarrelling, on the day before the robbery. This was the clue that ultimately led to the capture of two of them. The beer-shop keepers, in several instances, had kept an eye on these rough customers, and in the course of conversation got out of them that they were 'bankers' in search of a job; that they had been at work on one of the West-of-England canals; and that they were going northwards to look for employment. The landlady of the Harp beer-shop, which was not above five miles from the Hall, was so satisfied that the four men were about no good, that she took particular notice of their faces and general appearance. She was able, therefore, to give such a minute description as to place the constables very soon on the track of the gang; and in a day or two they picked up a couple of them, who were immediately identified by the landlady, and, as far as possible, sworn to by the terrified inmates of the Hall.

*"But what led to the establishment of their complete connection with the burglary was the finding on*

one of them part of a tradesman's account, which had been taken from the mantelpiece in the library and used by the fellow to light his pipe. Instead of throwing away the remnant of the paper, he had thrust it into his pocket, no doubt to serve for another pipe-light; and this scrap being produced in evidence, materially helped to hang him. The other was also convicted in a somewhat similar way: a silver spoon, with Mr. Elsey's initials, was found in his hat. The fellow had used it while regaling at the Hall to stir his grog with, and instead of putting it, as an *honourable* thief was bound to do, with the rest of the 'swag,' to be shared in common, he had shoved it under the lining of his hat, intending, no doubt, when the opportunity offered, to sell it, and sack the money. The names by which the two men were familiarly known were Timothy Tom and Bill Brimmer. They were convicted and hanged. No tidings of the other two could be obtained for more than a year, although it was well known they were working on different canals and railways in the midland counties, and that 100*l.* reward was offered for their apprehension, with a conditional pardon if one of them gave such evidence against the other as would lead to a conviction."

"But," said I, "how could it possibly happen that these two men were allowed to go about without being taken into custody, when their place of working was known?"

"The navvies and bankers are a rough set, and stick to one another like bricks," said Goddard; "no *officer or constable* dares to show his face among them,

and no magistrate could have induced a country constable, or even half a dozen constables, to execute a warrant; for though the officers might succeed in taking their man, they would be marked for ever, and waylaid where they could not get help or defend themselves. Well, I went over the way to my man, and after a little coaxing I brought him back to the court, and persuaded him to make such a deposition as would justify the magistrate in issuing his warrant. I found my navvy, whose name was Joe Beales, to be a regular uncultivated savage. With a great deal of difficulty, I got him to come to terms; that is, he was to take Scho. and myself to the place where Dick Poacher worked; he was to point out Dick by a sign previously agreed upon; and then, if we succeeded in taking him and lodging him in gaol, he was to have half the reward; if Dick escaped, he was to have a 5*l.* note only, and as many 'drunks' as he could screw out of us on the road.

"We got him on the Northampton coach that night, and kept him pretty quiet by letting him have ale and rum whenever the coach stopped to change horses. The quantity he put away was something astonishing, and yet we could not make him dead drunk, as we wished. We stopped at Bedford for the night. I must tell you that Scho. and myself were both armed with a brace of pistols; and we did not forget to let Joe Beales know it. We got a lodging at an inn, and told the landlord to let Joe have as *much ale as he could stow away*, thinking that would *keep him quiet until morning*.

"This fellow was one of the most original chaps I ever came across ; he could do more tricks than any one I ever knew—one, in particular, would make you die with laughing ; it was what he called 'unscrewing his nose.' He would lay hold of his long nose and twist it round, grinding his teeth all the while in a comical way, so as to make it really appear as if he was actually unscrewing his nose.

"We got him to bed at last, and thought we were comfortable till morning ; but in the night we were roused by a terrible row in his room, which was double-bedded. It turned out that a master-sweep and his man occupied the second bed ; and in the night Joe and the sweep began wrestling for a wager. Joe tackled the sweep, and at last the wrestle got to a fight ; when the journeyman, seeing his master getting the worst of it, pitched into Joe, and a regular Lancashire scrimmage took place. We rushed into the room with our pistols ; the landlord came out in his shirt, and seeing how we were armed, mistook us for highwaymen, and sent off to the barracks for the soldiers. In a few minutes we found ourselves under arrest ; but an explanation with the officer put matters right, and at last we managed to get the savage to bed again. In the morning our man turned sulky ; he would have nothing but rum, and we let him have enough, as we thought ; but the liquor only made him obstinate and quarrelsome.

"By the time we had got within a mile or two of Newbold, where the bankers, and Dick Poacher among *them*, worked, Joe flatly refused to go a step farther

unless the money was first paid over to him. I reasoned, but to no purpose. Schofield held the muzzle of a pistol to his head, and swore he would blow his brains out if he did not keep to his bargain. Nothing, however, would do; the fellow was neither to be frightened nor pacified. At last I told Schofield we would give up the job and go back. Schofield would not consent, and luckily thought of a plan that brought Joe to his senses. Schofield threatened to go on to Newbold to split on Joe Beales, and leave him to be dealt with by his mates when he found his way back again among them. This frightened the fellow effectually; for he well knew that he would never be allowed to work among any of the gang again, and that his life would not be worth a pea-shell as soon as his intention to betray a comrade was blown.

"Joe, after some rough parleying, agreed to proceed; and it was at last arranged that he should go into the inn where the bankers stopped to liquor after knocking off work, and that when Dick Poacher made his appearance, he was to call for a pot of ale and ask him to drink. This was to be the signal. I was to place myself where I could see all the movements of Joe, and, at the same time, to get sight of Dick Poacher, so that I might know him again when the chance occurred of taking him into custody. I was disguised in a smock and billy-cock hat, like a country pedlar. Schofield kept watch, pistol in hand, at a convenient distance. We got to the inn, and Joe sat down in the tap.

"Before, however, proceeding to the inn, we had

persuaded a couple of fighting men, for a sovereign a piece, to lend us a hand; and we took care to have a post-chaise waiting at the bottom of a hill at the end of a lane, through which Dick Poacher was expected to pass after leaving the inn. Here we placed a number of county constables; they refused to give any help themselves in taking the fellow, and would only consent to act when we got our man out of the lane. Well, every thing at last was settled; Schofield watching at a distance, and I sitting in the tap, just where I could have a full view of every thing that passed. I could perceive that Joe was arguing the matter over with himself; I was resolved, however, if he gave the 'office' to the bankers, I would shoot him there and then, as I was pretty sure the bankers would never let us off alive if once they got wind of our business. After waiting for about half an hour, Joe suddenly called for a mug of ale, and handing it over to one of the bankers, said:

“‘Hullo, Dick, my boy, take a drink.’

“An immensely powerful fellow, knock-kneed, took the mug and drank. I knew at once, from the hand-bill, this was our man. In a short time the bankers began to move off, Dick Poacher the last. Dick, however, did not take the lane, as we expected, but went down a by-road, which luckily led to where the post-chaise was stationed. I went after him, followed by Schofield and the two fighting-men. Dick Poacher turned round, and seeing us following him, stopped, and taking the pickaxe from his shoulder, raised it in a menacing manner.

“‘Keep off,’ he roared, ‘or I’ll brain both on ye.’

“‘Don’t be a fool, Dick,’ says I; ‘you’re only “wanted” about a “kid” you haven’t paid for.’

“‘It’s a dom’d lee,’ said he. ‘You’re from Lunnnon, and that accounts for Joe Beales being hereabouts. Halloo, mates!’ raising his voice, and beckoning to his comrades.

“Schofield sprang forward, with a pistol in each hand.

“‘Drop that pickaxe,’ said he, ‘or, by G—, I’ll shoot you.’

“I rushed on Dick and pinned one of his arms; the two pugilists pinned the other. Dick was as strong as a bullock, and resisted like a madman, bellowing to his comrades to help him. The bankers were not out of hearing; they came rushing towards us, armed with picks and shovels. Schofield kept them at bay with his pistols, swearing hard and fast that he would blow out the brains of the first man who attempted to pass him. The bankers were daunted for the moment, but several of them ran round the hedge to take us in the rear. We kept dragging Dick down the lane, he kicking us with his heavy boots, and plunging about like a wild-beast. Just as the first batch of bankers got to the hedge, and were about to jump over, we came within sight of the post-chaise; we called to the post-boy to drive towards us; he did so, and by main strength we forced Dick Poacher in and shut the door, having first succeeded in getting on the handcuffs. I jumped on *the box*, Schofield on the roof, and the post-chaise *alopped off*. We had some ugly knocks with stones

that were flung after us, and Schofield nearly tumbled off when the chaise started; but we got away safely with our man, and lodged him in Lincoln Gaol. As we went in, we passed through the strong-room, in which were the plaster-casts of Timothy Tom and Bill Brimmer, who had both been hanged for the same job. When the busts caught the eye of Dick Poacher, he dropped his head, and walked on as tame as a lamb."

"I suppose he was hanged like the rest?" said I.

"No; he was only transported for life. Perhaps the prosecutor did not wish to make the case too heavy against him; and this saved his life. It was, however, one of the roughest pieces of work I ever went through, and I didn't much care for another job of the same sort; for though we got the reward, there was so many in it, that it quite took the gold off the gingerbread."

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### A LESSON TO MEDDLERS.

ONE evening, at the Marlborough Head, the conversation among the officers of the court turned upon the difficulties they so frequently met with—when, in the execution of their duty, taking into custody, perhaps, a troublesome beggar, a foul-mouthed prostitute, a well-known thief, a drunken ruffian, or, in short, any street nuisance which their very vocation as constables required them to abate or remove—from the improper and injudicious interference of *the mob*, often the confederates of the thief or pro-

stitute in custody, and sometimes of well-meaning persons, who could see nothing but what, in their opinion, was an exhibition of unnecessary force exerted to lodge the offender in the lock-up house, and hear nothing but the loud protestations of innocence and exclamations against the cruelty and violence to which they—the culprits—were subjected. It may be safely taken as a rule, that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the officer, constable, street-keeper, or policeman, is right; that he ought to receive assistance from standers-by; or, at least, if active assistance is not given, that he should be allowed to effect his capture without insult or obstruction. In the hundredth case—assuming that a constable displays needless violence or insolence in discharge of what he conceives to be his duty—should he, in fact, be wholly unfit for his post, and show by his conduct incontestably that he is so—even then I do not mean to say that the mob ought to interfere, either in the way of obstructing or ill-using the officer. The redress for misconduct on the part of a constable—I am speaking now with reference to the police—is so easy and prompt, that no one can be justified in taking his own view of what is right, and doing his own justice on assumed official offenders. A complaint properly laid, either before the Scotland-Yard Commissioners or a magistrate, against any constable, is sure to be investigated; and if established, the constable is speedily deprived of all chance of repeating his misconduct by dismissal from the force. But there *is* a somewhat general and very unfounded prejudice *against the police in the public mind.* I have heard

people in a decent station of life, who ought to have known better, condemn in unmeasured language the whole body of the constabulary, the general behaviour of constables, and the system that was assumed to screen their arbitrary and illegal proceedings. No greater mistake can prevail than this. As a body, the police are the best-conducted civil force in the world. They are insufficiently paid; their emoluments bear no just proportion to their onerous duties and responsibilities, and frequently they are subjected to shameful personal maltreatment, arising from popular prejudices against them, and from the foolish disposition of meddlers rather to give assistance to the breakers of the public peace than to those who are its appointed and paid guardians.

It would form a frightful and lengthy list if the names were given of all the constables who, since the establishment of the force, have been killed outright by brutal violence committed on them in the public streets—kicked, beaten, jumped upon, eyes literally smashed in their heads, teeth knocked out, limbs broken, or miserably maimed in the prime of life by that species of cowardly and savage mode of kicking practised most commonly in what are called the “Irish districts.” I say the list would shock and startle the public were it given to them, and the details and results of the injuries fairly and intelligibly set forth. I have often expressed my astonishment to the acting inspectors, when I have seen a well-conducted constable with every feature beaten out of human proportions by some well-known ruffian and his “pals.”

that the constable did not protect himself with his truncheon.

"If he had," the inspector would reply, "why then the next morning some of the papers would be full of the 'brutal conduct of police-constables.' The editors of these papers would have long articles on the 'brutality and inefficiency of the force in general,' and an outcry would be raised calling upon the commissioner to dismiss the particular 'brute' who, to save his life, had knocked down a rough with his truncheon; the result of which would be, that the poor fellow, who did less than what every one of these eloquent writers would probably have done if attacked in the same way, would receive dismissal from the force without pension or character; perhaps himself, his wife, and children exposed to destitution for the remainder of their days. No; it is always best for constables to allow themselves to be three parts murdered rather than to use their truncheons."

Now, mind, I am no advocate for either the needless exhibition, and certainly not the needless use, of the truncheon; but I do say, if used only in a protective sense, in some of the well-known districts, ten times oftener than it is, it would not be more than constables would be entitled to do in fair self-defence. I do not say that the constables are always right, or civil, or forbearing; I know instances to the contrary: but what I do repeat—and my remark is founded on thirty years' personal observation—is, that as a body *they are well-conducted, desirous of doing their duty to the best of their ability, and that in ninety-nine out*

of every hundred street-cases they are right, ought to have prompt assistance, when needed, from the public, and in no case ought to be obstructed.

I will now go back to the conversation at the Marlborough Head, which occurred about the time when the new police were established, and when the old police were only in process of being abolished.

"I do not remember ever having received any assistance from bystanders, when I've had to take into custody a troublesome customer," said Clements, an officer known for his determined but temperate conduct in the discharge of his duty. "I have had frequently to fight against odds to take my man, and have generally found the mob against me."

"The mob's always more ready to take the part of a thief or a murderer than an officer with a warrant to apprehend him," said Avis. "I haven't a limb about me that hasn't been bruised or broken, just because I couldn't get people standing by to help while I was taking a cove into custody."

"What I most disliked," said Ballard, "was the interference of your clever 'gentleman,' who knew nothing about the merits of the case, had not seen the commencement, and only came up, perhaps, just at the moment when, after a hard tussle and some serious injuries, an officer had succeeded in overcoming resistance."

"I have often had such 'gents' interfere, but they were never right in any one case that I could make out," said Clements.

"I'll tell you an instance that happened to me,

which helped to give a lesson to one of this kind of meddling gentry that did no harm to him or me either. You all recollect 'Cauliflower,' the black crossing-sweeper. Well, I needn't tell you that a greater savage was not to be found in London than this man. He would never stick to any crossing in particular, but would go about from crossing to crossing—perhaps one day in Piccadilly, another in Regent Street, a third in Oxford Street; wherever he saw a tidy business doing; he would drive away the regular sweeper and take his place. It was of no use for the poor sweepers to kick at this: if they showed fight, he would knock them down with his broom; and if people interfered, he would serve them the same, or rush at them and bite away at them like a wild-beast. He was the terror of the West-End crossing-sweepers, and the disgrace of the West End of the town.

"One day I was with Muggeridge, the St. James's beadle, who had on his gold-laced parochial robes and cocked hat, when we saw a number of people rushing along in a state of terror. In a moment afterwards Cauliflower made his appearance, running amuck at every body, knocking them down with fist and broom, and biting wherever he got a chance. Two people had been so badly injured that they were obliged to be carried off to the Middlesex Hospital. I saw what was the matter in a moment, and crossing over suddenly, I met Cauliflower full-butt as he came foaming along, and downed him like a sack. I knew there was no *time to be lost*, for he was one of the most powerful *men ever tackled*; and, therefore, when he was floored,

I threw myself upon him and tightened his cravat until his tongue began to show between his teeth. The mob was on my side up to this point. Thinking I had quieted Cauliflower for a time, I got up, and called Muggeridge to lend a hand. But Cauliflower was only shamming: he no sooner felt himself at liberty, than he jumped up and flung himself on Muggeridge, fastening his teeth in his shoulder, just for all the world as a wolf would do. I choked Cauliflower off; and having dropped his head, not very softly, once or twice on the kerb, Cauliflower, finding he was mastered, gave in. We took him along, four of us, one at each arm and leg, turning him over, face downwards—the only way to carry a restive man—and when he began to kick, which he did most furiously every now and then, we let him drop on his face in the mud, making his nose even flatter than it was by nature. Well, you may think that by this time Cauliflower looked a very pretty figure, what with the blood and the mud. We got, in this way, to Poland Street, and were just turning into Great Marlborough Street, when Cauliflower, by a tremendous kick, sent Muggeridge, cocked hat and all, flying into the middle of the street, and by another effort got his other leg free, kicking about like a brewer's horse. I was obliged to tighten his cravat again, otherwise the savage would soon have been loose; and doing mischief; and while the struggle was going on, up came a well-dressed gentleman—I knew him in a moment as Mr. Phillips, one of the Home Secretaries.

“What does all this scandalous violence mean?”

he said, with a very grand air; 'it cannot be necessary, I am certain.'

" 'Pray, sir, don't interfere with us,' I said; 'we are officers, and are taking a man who has nearly killed two persons.'

" 'You officers! then I am surprised you don't know your duty better: you are using more than necessary violence,' said Mr. Phillips; 'I insist on your conducting yourselves with proper humanity.'

" 'Oh, kind, good gentlemen,' said Blackey, who was as artful as a fox, 'don't let 'em kill poor blackey man, wot got no friends.'

" 'You shall not want a friend if you will behave quietly,' says the 'good gentlemen.' 'I'll see that you are not ill-used.'

" 'Bress you, good gentlemen; I'll go any where with you, if you only be kind to poor black man, and keep dem ruffens from choken on him.'

" 'There,' said Mr. Phillips, turning round to me, 'you see what a little kindness and persuasion will do; the poor man only resisted because he was shamefully used. You constables never know when to act with discretion. It's all brute force with you, when a little judgment and temper would effect all you want. Treat him as a brute, you make a brute of him; treat him as a man, and he will act as a man. I will answer for this poor man's peaceable conduct if you will leave him to my care.'

" 'I'll go any where like lamb wid dis good gentlemen,' said Blackey.

" 'Well, sir,' said I to Mr. Phillips, not unwilling

to let him have a lesson he did not much expect, 'if you'll take the responsibility on yourself, I will give up my prisoner to you.'

" 'I take the responsibility cheerfully,' said he. 'I feel certain fair words and gentle treatment are all that are required "to overcome resistance to the law" by the greatest ruffian.'

"I signed to Muggeridge to keep back, and I allowed the pair to walk on ahead about twenty yards. I could hear Cauliflower spinning a long yarn about the rough treatment he had received, and Mr. Phillips sympathising with him. I felt sure, however, that Cauliflower meant mischief; for I saw him casting now and then a sly look backward, to see if we were following. I crossed over the way, and then Cauliflower, not seeing me when he gave another look—thinking, no doubt, that we had gone forward and left him alone with his companion—suddenly turned on Mr. Phillips, seized him by the throat, and threw him on his back in a mess of mud that was just ready to be carried away by the scavengers. The savage was about to fling himself on his prostrate victim—who, in terror and pain, shrieked loudly for assistance—and was in the act of stooping his head to bite, when I rushed over and knocked the sense out of him with a blow of my staff. Having secured him with a pair of handcuffs, I proceeded to help up Mr. Phillips, who was in a ludicrous plight, covered with mud from head to foot, and with a badly-bruised eye. The officers and the magistrates, who knew him at once,

were very much astonished at the figure he cut, and were profuse in their offers of sympathy.

“ ‘I will not accept your kindness,’ said he, ‘until I have publicly done an act of justice in commending your officer, Clements, and in exposing my own folly. I consider myself rightly served for having attempted to teach men their duty who knew it far better than I did, and I only wish the lesson I have had this day, which will last me for life, could be given to other meddlers who presume to interfere with constables when in the execution of their duty.’

“ Mr. Phillips then thanked me for the prompt help I had given to him, and begged my pardon publicly for interfering. I was pleased at the adventure, for it made me a favourite at the Home Office, very much to my profit, because many a well-paid job was afterwards put in my way.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### SINGULAR DETECTION OF BURGLARS.

THE detectives sometimes light upon information relating to an offence, contemplated or perpetrated, in a way which borders on the marvellous. One instance occurred in this locality, which will serve as an apt corroboration of this statement.

Detective-Sergeant Hardwick was passing through Silver Street, on his way to the Vine-Street station-house, when he passed three men, who were standing together at the door of a public-house at the corner of

a stable-yard. As he went by, he heard one of the men say :

"It's no go to-night; we must put off the job."

Fancying there was something that might require his professional attention under these words, he crossed over, and watched the movements of the party unperceived. He saw them go towards the shop of a leather-seller a few doors from the public-house, look steadily up at a light which was visible at the bedroom-floor, and then go back to the public-house. The next day he set on foot his inquiries, and soon ascertained that one of the persons he had seen at the door of the public-house was a relative of the landlord's; that the landlord was a respectable man, but that his relative was of bad character, and a known associate of thieves. He also traced the other two men to Short's Gardens—a place of infamous repute before the alterations by the Metropolitan Board of Works had been determined upon. Feeling now fully persuaded that a burglary was being arranged, he went to the superintendent, Beresford, and acquainted him with his suspicions. He received permission from the superintendent to follow up the clue, and to have any assistance he might think necessary. Detective Hardwick fixed upon Police-Sergeant Gray as his coadjutor, of whose skill more than one specimen has been given. The constables immediately settled their plan of action. They engaged the use of a parlour which commanded a view of the public-house, and also the premises which, it was assumed, were to be robbed; and there they kept *watch*, night and day. They never lost sight of the

suspected places for a moment—one remained on the look-out while the other took rest; and this continued until the following Sunday, about seven o'clock in the evening. The constable Gray, who was doing the "wide-awake" business, saw the three confederates come from the public-house, proceed to the door of the shop of the leather-merchant, apply a latch-key, and in a minute or two gain an entrance.

I may as well state here that the constables had contrived to obtain a good deal of information, which they put together, and, by the light of former experience, were able to anticipate the plan of operations. The leather-merchant was accustomed to pay a neighbourly visit to the public-house, and sometimes to send for change for notes to the landlord. The relative of the landlord had thus gained an insight into the domestic arrangements of the leather-merchant; in particular, had ascertained that a considerable sum of money was usually kept in the bedroom, and that on Sundays it was the custom for the leather-merchant to take a ride into the country, leaving the premises unguarded until he returned, which was sometimes at a late hour at night.

The detectives rightly suspected that the money was the object of the thieves—that the time when an attempt would be made to rob the premises would be Sunday; and the sequel proved that their judgment was correct. As soon as Gray saw two of the men enter, the third remaining on the watch near the door, *he woke his companion.*

"Tom," said he, "they're in and doing the job."

Shall we go and take 'em in the house, or wait until they come out?"

"Better let 'em do all they want to do before we drop upon them," said the sergeant, and this being agreed to, the constables posted themselves in the passage of the house where they had kept watch, with the door ajar, waiting until one or both of the burglars made their appearance. They waited about half an hour. The confederate on the watch, after looking up and down the street and satisfying himself that the coast was clear, gave a short whistle, which was the signal to the thieves inside that they might come out without being seen or suspected. In a minute the door was opened, and one of the thieves made his appearance; but he had hardly set his foot on the doorstep, before he was seized by Gray, dragged some distance to prevent him giving an alarm to his comrade, and then he was told that "he was wanted." The thief turned upon the constable, but was thrown down in a twinkling and secured. In a minute or two after this the second thief came out, quite unsuspecting. He had a large bundle with him, and his astonishment and fear were perfectly ludicrous when he found a strong hand laid on his collar, with a quiet intimation that he had better make no noise, and come peaceably, as he was in the hands of the police. The pair were forthwith lodged in the station-house at Vine Street. They had been disappointed of their principal booty, as it turned out, singularly enough, that the money had been removed that very morning from the place in which *it was usually kept*, and put in a position of more

security, which they had failed to discover. Resolving, however, not to come away empty-handed, they had taken every thing portable of value, and in particular a large quantity of boot-fronts, which could easily be turned into money. One of the thieves, when stripped, was found to be encased in these leather fronts, and the large bundle of the second was filled with the same kind of articles.

Having secured the two men, the constables went to the public-house and found the third, who was quite unconscious of the capture of his comrades. Gray produced a small chisel, which he had taken from one of the captured thieves, and this was immediately identified by the landlord. The chisel had been used by the thieves to force open the desks; and it was this instrument that formed a very material feature of the evidence against the third man, who, with the other two, were tried, convicted, and transported. The constables, as a matter of course, got great credit for the adroit way in which they had managed the whole affair.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### LOST AND FOUND. THE MISSING LORD.

THE bell in the magistrate's private room rang sharply one morning, and the messenger who answered the summons was told by Mr. Dyer, the sitting magistrate, *to send Dewing*, one of the newly-appointed officers, *to him immediately*. When Dewing made his appear-

ance in the room, he found two gentlemen and an old, gray-headed livery-servant there.

"Dewing," said Mr. Dyer, "these gentlemen want your assistance in tracing out the present locality of Lord —, who left his residence at — some days ago, and has not been heard of since. The small clue that they can give you appears to be very indefinite indeed; but I shall be much obliged if you will exert yourself to the utmost to serve these gentlemen, who are friends of mine; and your expenses, of course, will be paid by the family.

The officer thus selected was, fortunately, well qualified for the task. To great natural shrewdness he added the experience of many years in the police-force; rising from the ranks until appointed to the post of C-division Inspector; then quitting the force to take a responsible situation in the police-court, which situation he filled for some years.

The officer went with the party to an hotel in Albemarle Street, and there he was informed that Lord —, who had a mansion a few miles from Hounslow Heath, had left it a day or two previously, in the evening, under peculiar circumstances; and as his absence was prolonged, and he had not communicated with his family, fears were entertained for his safety. There was evidently a good deal of reserve in their communications evinced by the family party then located at the hotel in Albemarle Street; but as funds unlimited were placed at the disposal of the livery-servant who was to accompany the officer, and as expedition was urged on the officer, there was nothing left for

it but an immediate commencement. A post-chaise took officer and servant to the mansion near Hounslow. On the road, the servant, who was Lord ——'s valet, and who had been confidentially employed by his master for many years, became communicative, and gave the officer the following particulars :

His master was a nobleman of great wealth, feeble in health, and very much advanced in years. At the age of seventy-five, he had married a beautiful young woman ; and though thrice the age of the bride, the union might have been, if not a happy one, at least one not calling for particular remark, had it not been for an unpleasant circumstance. A neighbour, known as the "Squire," possessed a very handsome horse. Her ladyship, who was fond of riding, having met the "Squire" several times during her equestrian exercise, was struck with admiration of his horse, and expressed a wish to have it. Lord —— immediately waited on the "Squire," and, after some bargaining, became the purchaser of the horse. As the Squire was familiar with the vices as well as the virtues of the animal, it was arranged that when Lady —— mounted her new purchase, the Squire should ride with her, give her a lesson in horsemanship, and show her the best mode of managing the animal. The arrangement proved unfortunate, and gave rise to censorious remarks. The Squire was a gay, handsome man ; and as the riding excursions became very frequent, scandal at last grew very busy ; and unpleasant whispers at length were *carried to the ears* of Lord ——, who, being of an *irascible and jealous disposition*, immediately sought

an interview with his wife, and a serious altercation ensued.

Having ascertained that her ladyship had met the Squire the following day, after a prohibition against future meetings had been issued, Lord —— was nowhere to be found when the seven-o'clock dinner-hour arrived. None of the servants could tell where their master had gone. The lodge-keeper recollected seeing his lordship pass through the gate about dusk, with a small travelling-bag in his hand. This was all the intelligence that could be collected; and as two days passed without any tidings being heard from him, the members of his family were summoned, and the whole circumstances communicated to them. As Lord —— was very infirm, and his warm temper well known, vague fears began to be entertained; and the result was a visit to the metropolis, and a consultation with Mr. Dyer, who was personally acquainted with the family.

His lordship's valet told the officer that, although he could not acquit her ladyship of imprudence, yet he did not believe that any thing seriously wrong had occurred; and he felt satisfied, if he could only see his master, he would be able to induce him to return to his family.

When Dewing arrived at his lordship's residence, he found every thing, as might be expected, in confusion. Her ladyship could not, or would not, be seen; and no one was able to give the least clue to their master's movements. Dewing ascertained that on the day when his lordship was last seen, angry words had passed with her ladyship. His lordship

had then dressed himself without the aid of his valet, had taken a large sum of money in bank-notes—1500*l.* was the amount—from his *escritoire*, and had left the grounds in the way described. Dewing obtained as many particulars as he could collect, and, among other things, was told by the housekeeper that her master was very particular respecting his morning meal; that he would have nothing but green tea, and only thin bread-and-butter for breakfast; and that he required each slice of bread-and-butter to be covered with a second thin slice of dry bread. With these scanty particulars, Dewing and the old valet set out on their search.

Inquiries were made at all the inns in the neighbourhood; but no tidings of the fugitive could be collected. Having ascertained that the Reading coach passed down the road about the hour that his lordship left the house, Dewing resolved to make inquiries in that direction. A post-chaise soon took them to Reading; but search throughout the town was for some time fruitless. At one of the small inns, however, the chambermaid recollected that an elderly gentleman had come into the house by the back entrance, and had had tea and a bed there a night or two back, leaving by the Oxford coach the next morning. Dewing questioned the chambermaid particularly, and elicited that she recollected the old gentleman because he had given such odd directions about his tea, having ordered only green tea to be put in the teapot, and the bread-and-butter to be cut in a particular manner, each slice of *bread-and-butter* being accompanied by a thin slice of *dry bread*. This, at last, appeared to afford some clue,

and Dewing and the valet set off to Oxford. Here the clue again failed—no one answering at all the outward description of his lordship having put up at any of the inns.

Dewing, however, was not disposed to give up the pursuit until he had exhausted inquiries. Fancying that his lordship might have changed his clothes in order to elude detection with greater certainty, he inquired at the various ready-made clothes shops, and at last ascertained that an elderly gentleman had gone into one shop, had bought a complete suit of clothes, had put them on in the shop, and had left his own garments behind. The valet, on seeing these clothes, immediately identified them as belonging to his master. From the description of the dress then worn by Lord —, Dewing very soon ascertained that an old gentleman, dressed in clothes answering to those purchased at the tailor's, had taken the coach on to Birmingham. Another post-chaise was immediately ordered, and the officer and valet started off in pursuit. When arrived at Birmingham, Dewing's first inquiry was for the coachman who drove the coach. The coachman was unwell, and had gone to his own home, which was some miles from Birmingham. Dewing set off to the address, and found the coachman in bed. The coachman remembered taking up an old gentleman at Reading, and setting him down at the Royal Hotel in Birmingham. This was all the information he could give.

Birmingham was again visited, and inquiries made at the Royal Hotel. Here the clue was again lost, the waiters there being able to say nothing more than that

an old gentleman, who got down at the hotel, had a little refreshment and then went away. The most careful inquiries, first at all the leading hotels, then at the smaller taverns, failed to afford any assistance in their object. The officer and the valet resolved to stay the night in the town, and resume their search the next day. They chose one of the commercial inns located in a quiet street, and proceeded to make themselves comfortable for the remainder of the evening. The officer had occasion to step into the coffee-room just before going to bed, when his attention was attracted by the conversation of a couple of commercial travellers who were enjoying their grog and cigar together. They were talking of some person who had about an hour before entered the coffee-room, ordered supper and a bed, and who, after reading the paper and eating his frugal meal, had retired. One of the travellers having occasion to refer to the newspaper, took up the journal the new guest had been reading, and, to his utter astonishment, found wrapped up in it a roll of bank-notes in value 1500*l*. While in the act of counting the money, the new guest came into the room, and in the politest manner announced that he was the owner of the notes, and had left them in the paper by accident. Of course there could be no doubt about ownership; and the notes were handed to him, with a recommendation to be more careful in future of such valuable property.

"Precious lucky I looked at the paper," said the *commercial*. "But only think of the indifference with *which* the old gentleman shoved the money into his

waistcoat-pocket! I wonder who he can be? Let us ask Boots."

Boots was summoned; but all he could say was, that "the old gent warn't a commercial, for he'd no samples, and had booked an inside place for Liverpool by the early coach."

Dewing, feeling convinced that the "old gent" was the party of whom he was in quest, called the chamber-maid into counsel, without, however, letting her into the secret too completely; and as the "old gent" had gone to bed and locked his bedroom-door, the chamber-maid could not venture to disturb him, but promised to arrange matters so that the officer and the valet should have a full view of him as he passed from his bedchamber to the coffee-room the next morning, breakfast having been ordered at eight o'clock. Dewing, being satisfied that the bird—perhaps the real one—was caged, and could not escape, arranged the plan of operation. Next morning the officer and the valet planted themselves at the window which overlooked the yard leading from the bedrooms to the coffee-room, and precisely at eight o'clock an old gentleman, very feeble, crossed the yard, and went into the coffee-room. The valet whispered to Dewing:

"That's him!"

After a little consultation, it was agreed to let Lord — have his breakfast first, as it might seriously affect his ailing constitution if too suddenly accosted. Breakfast being finished, Lord — directed that a sheet of writing-paper should be taken into his bedroom. Having made his way back into the bed-

room, the valet, after a short interval, knocked at the poor.

"Come in!" said his lordship.

The old valet opened the door, and stood by the table at which Lord —— was seated, busily engaged in writing a letter. Lord —— suddenly looked up, and caught sight of his valet's face.

"Oh, John!" he exclaimed, "is that you? Why, what brought you here?"

"Oh, my dear master," said John, the tears running down his cheeks, "what brought *you* here? I've been looking every where for you since Wednesday, and now I've found you I want to take you home with me."

"No, John," said Lord ——, "I can't return."

"Pray, pray, my dear master, come back. My lady is breaking her heart at your absence."

"That must be a mistake, John. Your lady, more likely, is rejoiced at finding herself at liberty to follow her improper inclinations."

"My dear master, don't say so; my lady has only been giddy, nothing more. She is crying her eyes out at your absence."

"Well, John, if I could feel assured your lady really felt any regret at my absence, that would perhaps alter my views materially. I had pretty well made up my mind to take ship at Liverpool, and go to a distant continent."

"My dear master, you must go back; I can't leave *you*; I am sent here after you by your family, and I've got a London officer with me."

“What? an officer! Have they dared to disgrace me, by sending a police-officer to take me into custody?”

Dewing, who was outside, and who heard what passed, here presented himself before Lord —, and, in a delicate way, pointed out the duty that devolved upon him, and his desire to discharge it in such a way as would not prove offensive to his lordship, or give the least hint to others of his instructions or his office. Lord —, after some further persuasion, being evidently moved by the strong protestations on the part of the valet about Lady —’s distress at the flight of her lord, eventually consented to go back; and a post-chaise having been ordered, all parties took their way to —, and reached there the same evening. The officer was dismissed with a handsome gratuity for the tact and good feeling he had displayed.

And perhaps it may be satisfactory to state, that explanations having been entered upon on both sides, Lord — abandoned his jealous suspicions, and Lady — gave up her injudicious morning rides.

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## ODDITIES OF LONDON LIFE.

Under the above title, I made a collection of some of the cases which came before the Marlborough-Street magistrates, and which appeared mostly in the *Morning Herald*, for the amusement of its readers. The *facts* are as they came out in evidence; the only merit the reporter claims is that of putting them in what he considered to be a humorous light. The following selection has been made at random, and will serve to show how newspaper-readers liked to be amused thirty years ago.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

## TRAGEDY IN TRIBULATION.

MRS. MARGERY WILKENS, a little dumpy figure, with face and arms as blue as bilberries, waddled up to the Bench of Commissioners of the Westminster Court of Requests to make good her claim to 17s. 9d. for the hebdomadal ablutions of the body-linen of one Mister Kemble Macready Waldegrave, a six-foot aspirant to histrionic honours, and a well-known tragedy "star" at one of the minor theatres.

The defendant had failed to appear to the first summons; consequently he was taken bodily into custody by virtue of a warrant, very much to his surprise and *discomfiture*.

*The defendant's appearance created considerable*

merriment; his nether limbs were encased in sock and buskin, comically contrasting with a blue body-coat, buttoned quite up to the chin. He had evidently been captured just as he was preparing to "cork" for the part of the "jealous Moor" at a dress rehearsal of *Othello*.

The lady complainant proceeded to set forth the mode in which the recusant defendant had contrived to get into her debt. She had undertaken to keep him in clean linen for ninepence a week; but having by repeated washings reduced his entire stock of body-linen to one shirt and a couple of tails, and seeing there was no likelihood of such an augmentation of wardrobe as would justify an extension of credit, she presented her little bill, and was faithfully promised full payment out of the proceeds of a forthcoming "benefit," which the play-bills set forth was about to take place. The "benefit," however, when it came off, proved unproductive; and as no cash was consequently forthcoming, and both soap and patience were exhausted, the complainant took out a summons for the accumulated debt.

*Commissioner.* Why do you refuse to pay this poor woman her bill?

*Defendant.* "The very head and front of my offending hath this extent—no more:" Why do I refuse to pay? "I am a man more sinned against than sinning." This woman hath despoiled me of my best linen shirt—nay, more—a "handkerchief of India silk, beyond all price, fo 'twas mine only one."

*Complainant.* Oh, goodness gracious! your best

shirt? why, my lord, he never had more than one whole one since hever I washed for him, and he's got it on at this blessed moment. I've got old Mister Jones here to prove that he always lent Mr. Waldegrave one of his dickeys when he sent his dirty shirt to the wash. (*Laughter.*)

*Defendant.* "He told a lie, an odious lie; upon my soul, a d—d lie."

*Complainant.* I'll be on my Bible-oath it's true, your lordship. His other shirt's in such a state, that if it goes into the copper again it must be boiled in a cabbage-net, or I'll never get out all the pieces. (*Laughter.*) Here, Betty (calling to an old woman the counterpart of one of the *Macbeth* witches),—here, Betty, show the gentlemen the shirt.

*Defendant* (pushing back Betty). "How now, ye secret, black, and midnight hags? what is't ye do?"

Betty, however, produced the shirt, and held it up amidst the involuntary laughter of the whole court. It presented just such an appearance as might be supposed to have been produced had it received the point-blank discharge from a grape-and-canister loaded eight-and-forty pounder.

*Complainant.* There, your lordships, that's his shirt; only see how it's patched and darned, which I never charged him a blessed farden for; did I, Betty?

*Betty.* No, you didn't; and he never vos man enough to go for to hoffer to pay a dump.

*Defendant.* "Rumble your bellyful; spit fire; crack your cheeks. I tax ye not with unkindness; I never gave ye kingdoms,"

*Complainant.* You give us *kingdoms*! why, you poor shabby scrub, I've never seen the colour of your money; and you never gave us the price of a quartern of gin all the time I've washed for you. You're a pretty harticle to talk about giving away *kingdoms*.

*Defendant.* "Aroint thee, ronyon, for a rump-fed witch."

*Complainant.* Only listen, your lordships; that's just the way he goes on at me when I ax him for a trifle off his bill. It's quite hawful to hear such heaps of wickedness come out of his mouth.

*Defendant.* "But where's the handkerchief? to lose 't or giv 't away, were such perdition as nothing else could match."

*Complainant.* It hasn't been sent to the wash this three weeks, you nasty fellow.

*Defendant.* "The handkerchief—"

*Complainant.* I haven't set hies on it; no more has Betty.

*Defendant.* "The handkerchief—"

*Complainant.* Don't *bullock* me, young man. It wasn't sent, I say.

*Defendant.* "Away—"

The chief commissioner here interposed, and requested the theatrical hero to condescend to tell the court in plain language when and how he would pay the complainant her demand.

*Defendant.* "Base is the slave who pays."

*Commissioner.* We must then sign judgment against you.

The defendant threw himself into a tragedy atti-

tude, and, after meditating for a minute, appeared to be suddenly struck by a bright thought. He asked for four-and-twenty hours' grace.

The commissioners acceded to the request, intimating, however, pretty plainly, if full payment of claim and costs was not made, that judgment would be signed forthwith.

The defendant then folded his arms, nodded majestically to the bench, and, stalking with true tragedy-stride out of court, ejaculated, as he cast a meaning glance on the sleeve of his blue-body coat :

" Oh, my prophetic soul—my *uncle* !"

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

A GAY DECEIVER ; OR, TWO STRINGS TO ONE BEAU.

MISS LAURA SMITHERS and Miss Susan Jones, a pair of antiquated spinsters, came before the bench, the first as complainant, the last as defendant, in a charge of assault. The belligerent parties lodged in the same house in Wardour Street : Miss Susan, in the two-pair back, cultivated the sedentary art of stay-stitching ; and Miss Laura, in the room above, devoted all her energies to making, cleaning, and modernising straw-bonnets. For a length of time they had lived upon terms of, what may be styled, reciprocal friendship. Miss Laura's " tea and turn out" one night being repaid, on the part of Miss Susan, with " oysters and a drop of short" the next. A stop was, however, put to *this state* of matters by the appearance, about a month

ago, of one Mr. Samuel Hubble, who came to lodge in the front-parlour and room adjacent. A kind of rivalry for the good graces of the new lodger soon sprung up betwixt the two damsels—one every morning supplying him with hot water for his breakfast from her own tea-kettle, the other taking charge of his shirt-button and stocking-darning department. A slight catarrh that attacked Mr. Hubble called forth the tender sympathies of the pair of rivals; and if Miss Laura gave him his gruel one night, Miss Susan balanced matters with the warming-pan the next.

The lucky Mr. Hubble, who contrived to divide his attentions so judiciously that each thought herself “the favoured fair,” lived in clover until the day on which the alleged assault ensued. Mr. Hubble, it appeared, had faithfully promised to make one of a family party at Miss Smithers’; but on the appointed afternoon he despatched a billet, pleading, by way of excuse for the non-fulfilment of his engagement, “pressing” business of a very private nature. The lynx-eyed Miss Smithers guessed at once that her rival was, somehow or other, at the bottom of the “pressing” business; and feeling “all the vulture in her *claws*” on hearing about tea-time the footsteps of more than *one* person in her rival’s room, she went softly up-stairs, as she said, merely to borrow a pair of bellows, but in reality, as was more correctly surmised by Miss Jones, to see who was in her apartment.

Peeping through the key-hole, the irate Miss Laura caught a glimpse of her rival’s toasting-fork, with a muffin at one end and the faithless Samuel Hubble at

the other. She knocked softly, and asked for the bellows; and the defendant was about to hand them cautiously through a chink, when she pushed past her and came full upon the dumbfounded Hubble, who had vainly hoped to screen himself behind the cupboard-door. Her first salute consisted in laying hold of the plate of hot buttered muffins, and sending the greasy missiles full smack at the quaking Mackheath; the teapot was about to follow, when she was confronted by her too successful rival, who, rushing to the rescue, in a trice changed the aspect of affairs, and compelled the complainant to decamp, minus a new auburn front, and with her countenance handsomely ornamented all over with finger-nail etching.

This was the assault complained of.

A short, pot-bellied personage, wearing a pair of green spectacles, came forward, and, bowing pompously to the bench, said: "My name, your worship, is Hubble, —Samuel Augustus Plantagenet Hubble,—and deeply grieved that the personal affairs of such an insignificant individual as myself" (here Mr. Hubble glanced with an air of deep humility round the court) "should have occupied so much of the public's valuable time. I am the innocent cause of the unfortunate rumpus between these two elderly ladies." (Both ladies, "Oh, you wretch!") "And though my bran-new green-velvet waistcoat was spoilt in the scrimmage, I'll undertake, on my own responsibility, to heal immediately all these little breaches. Permit me, therefore, *your worships*, to retire with my fair friends for five *minutes* for the purpose of meditating between them."

Permission having been granted, the queer-looking Mr. Hubble gallanted the parties into the passage. In a very short time he returned, with an elongation of visage which showed that his *meditations* had not been crowned with success.

"I wash my hands at once and for ever of this extraordinary business," said Mr. Hubble, with great dignity; "I did hope that my straining a point or two would have had the proper effect. But no; both ladies charge me with having only *interesting* motives in my conduct towards 'em. I scorn the imputation, and, as a public duty I owe to myself, I assert here, in the face of the day, that I have been most *uninteresting* as far as my little attentions were concerned. Here let me offer a hand of peace and friendship to each."

The ladies, however, rejected the fat fist of the detected with scorn; and having come to an understanding betwixt themselves, and the expenses of the summons having been jointly defrayed, the reconciled rivals left the office, darting looks of scorn at the too gallant Mr. Hubble, whose future hot-water and shirt-button prospects, from the turn matters had taken, appeared to be placed in considerable jeopardy.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## ARISTOCRATIC AMUSEMENTS.

EVERY one—at least, every one old enough—must recollect the effect of the clever etchings which adorned Pierce Egan's well-known work of *Life in London*.

All the bearded and unbearded youth of the metropolis incontinently associated in trios, and "Tom, Jerry, and Logic" flourished and fought together in every quarter. It became then not at all disreputable to be seen at "flash" houses, in company with persons of "doubtful" and "undoubted" character. The old watch were marked as the fair game of these midnight frolickers; and many a broken head on one side, and a reluctant guinea on the other, bore testimony to the then prevalent mania. The establishment of the new police nipped this sort of crepuscular "larking" at the root. The force being mostly composed of stout young fellows, acting in concert, and able to concentrate on a given point in ample strength with sufficient celerity, it became a task both inglorious and perilous to renew old practical jokes. But though Tom-and-Jerry exhibitions at night are now unfrequent, there are other species of "amusements" which have taken their place, and which furnish to young "swells" of the present day a mode of killing time and of *undermining* their constitutions. One of the most popular *pleasures* of our time is that of wrenching off knockers,

door-plates, bells, and any ornamental work which good or bad taste lead persons to affix to their residences.

To such an extent is this silly and mischievous mania carried, that a junior member of a family of rank, whose lordly habitation is not a hundred miles from Piccadilly, always carries about with him a set of beautifully polished steel tools—all the contrivance of his own genius—admirably adapted to deprive a door of its knocker with noiseless expedition, or to bend a bell-handle so as to render it in a minute entirely useless.

Another young “gentleman,” who is smitten with a similar kind of knocker-phobia, no sooner makes his appearance at night in the street, than the police keep a bright look-out, his person being well known to them, together with the fact of his having *in petto* up his coat-sleeve a double-purchase “jemmy,” which enables him, while passing leisurely along the street, to split off the knocker of any door within reach of his arm. This “gentleman” on a recent occasion was taken into custody, when no fewer than THIRTEEN knockers and bell-handles were found in his pocket. This celebrity may be dubbed the very Napoleon of knockers. One room in his residence is entirely devoted to the reception of his midnight trophies; and his museum of abstracted knockers is understood to form one of the most singular of eccentric collections.

One morning last winter five “real swells,” as they are termed by the initiated, were charged with a proceeding of an extraordinary character. About five o'clock in the morning, “reeling ripe” from the headquarters of debauchery, the W——d Arms in the

Haymarket, a party of young noblemen and gentlemen made their way into the King's Head public-house, with the full intention of having a "spree." Fastening the doors, they began an attack on all present; and having mastered resistance, proceeded to finish their exploit by destroying the landlord's property. A well-known nobleman, the ringleader in such "frolics," seized the beer-engine, and at one vigorous pull tore it from its fastenings. All the spirit-taps were set a-running, and gin, rum, brandy, with a variety of "compounds," soon flooded the whole place. In vain the landlord entreated, prayed, threatened; the mischievous party would not desist until the gas-lamps and every article of glass within reach were reduced to shivers. The police, who had intimation of what was transacting, were afraid to interfere, as part of their official orders was not to enter public-houses unless "murder" was called. The inspector on duty being informed of the outrageous "lark," promptly sent a sufficient force, who soon gained admission to the house, and captured five of the ringleaders.

The aristocratic defendants, however, it may be mentioned as something to their credit, in all such adventures are never backward in making full compensation to parties who have been damnified; and as the landlord had been previously "squared" by the interposition of certain friends, the only charge made against the offending parties, and of which the magistrates were at all permitted to be cognisant, was that of intoxication, for which the stated fine of five shillings *was inflicted and paid.*

The parties, smiling at their situation, threw down a couple of sovereigns, and left the office, to plan new exhibitions of "life" in the Haymarket.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## POETRY AND PRIGGING.

BETWEEN poets and prigs, though seemingly "wide as the poles asunder," a strong family likeness exists; and that list of petty-larceny rogues would certainly be incomplete which did not include the Parnassian aspirant. The main difference, however, between prigs and poets appears to be this: that prigs hold the time-hallowed maxim of "Honour among thieves" in scrupulous reverence, and steal only from the public; while the poets, at least of modern days, less scrupulous, steal unblushingly from one another. Should the connection between the two antique professions be questioned, the following case may probably assist in settling the doubt.

Mike Smith, a ragged urchin, sharp as a ferret and cunning as a fox,—who, though hardly able to peep over the police-bar, has been in custody more than a dozen times for petty thefts,—was charged by one William King, a cobbler and ginger-beer vendor, with stealing a bottle of ginger-pop from his stall-board.

The prosecutor, in a dismal tone, declared that the neighbourhood in which his stall was unluckily located—*that more than Cretan labyrinth known as the "Dial"*

—was so thickly infested with “young *narmint*,” that he found it utterly impossible to turn an honest penny by his ginger-pop; for if his eye were off the board in front of his truck for a single instant, the nimble young Arabs, who were lying perdu on the watch, took immediate advantage of the circumstance; and he was sure on his next inspection to make the unpleasant discovery that a bottle or two had vanished. While busily engaged on a pair of “uppers” that morning, he happened to cast his eyes on his stock of ginger-pop, when, to his utter astonishment, he saw a bottle moving off the board, just for all the world as if the bottle possessed the power of locomotion. A second bottle was about to follow, when he bethought himself of popping his head over the half-door—a movement that served to clear up the mystery; for incontinently he discovered the delinquent at the bar on all-fours making a rapid retreat, with the ginger-pop—the cork from the bottle of which had flown out—fizzing from his breeches-pocket. After a smart administration of the strappado, the cobbler proceeded to examine the apology for a pinafore which the urchin had bundled round him. This led to the discovery that the ginger-pop prigger had been on a most successful forage for a dinner that morning. There was a delicate piece of pickled pork, a red herring, a couple of eggs, a twopenny loaf, a piece of carrot, a new China basin, and the lid of a tea-pot, the whole of which he admitted, on being closely pressed, was the result of his morning’s legerdemain labour.

*The cobbler having whimpered his grievances into*

the ear of Justice, the prisoner, who had paid close attention to all that was alleged to his disparagement, here called out briskly:

"Put up the old snob agin, cos I wants to cross-kvestin him."

*Mr. Dyer.* Well, you may ask him any question you like.

*Prisoner* (to the cobbler). Now, old snobby,—mind you're on yer *solid* hoath,—tell his vership how hoften yer master vopped yer, ven yer vos a 'prentice, for stealing his leather.

*Mr. Dyer.* That is an improper question, and I cannot allow it to be put.

*Prisoner.* Vy, hasn't he bin a taking away my character? and vy shouldn't I take away his'n? This here ain't the place for jestice, that's werry clear. You may stand down, cobbler; for arter that there I sha'n't ax yer no funder kvestions. Now, yer vership, I've got three pints of hobjection to take.

*Mr. Dyer.* Well, let me hear them.

*Prisoner.* Fust and foremost, you ain't got no jury-dictionary over this here case, cos it ain't "stealing in a dwelling-house" to prig from an open stall.

*Mr. Dyer.* Your next.

*Prisoner.* Vy, I'm charged with stealing a "bottle of ginger-beer." Vere's the ginger-beer? the prosticator only perduces a hempty bottle.

*Mr. Dyer.* Your third.

*Prisoner.* You can't make out no crime agin me, cos it warn't ginger-beer at all; it ves only treacle and *vater*, with a little pepper in it. He charges tuppens

for vots costes him half a farden; and as he robs the public, consequentl<sup>y</sup>e I've a right to rob him.

*Mr. Dyer.* I shall commit you to the Brixton House of Correction for three months.

*Prisoner* (eagerly). Lunar or calendar?

*Mr. Dyer.* Calendar months.

*Prisoner.* Oh, werry well, old bloke; you've done yer vorst.

*Mr. Dyer.* And once to be privately whipped.

The boy, when removed to the lock-up cell,—a proceeding which familiarity had taught him to regard with indifference,—gave vent to a poetical inspiration by scratching with an old nail the following admonitory distich on the wall:

“Him as prigs wot isn't his'n,  
Ven he's cotched vil go to pris'n.”

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### AN IRISH SHINDY.

BIDDY WALLIS and Kitty Bryan, a brace of “Erin's fair daughters,” brawny and bony, came before Mr. Chambers and Mr. Hall on an assault-warrant. Black eyes and scratched faces on both sides indicated that the prowess of the combatants, and the thorough good will with which it had been called into action, were pretty equally balanced.

“Your wertchip,” said the complainant, Kitty Bryant, “before I was put to bed wid me thirteenth ahilder, I had a fallin' cut wid Biddy; and bekase I'd

a heavy time ov it, she exposed me shamefully in at Jack Duggan's. Last wake I came home, lit me bit of fire, biled me bit of bacon, and ate me bit of dinner, and thin I wint out wid me own husband, and me child two months old in me arms, to buy meself a new pair of shoes—"

*Mr. Chambers.* Come to the assault as soon as you can, Kitty.

*Kitty.* Wait awhile, yer honour, and I'll be at it. Well, as me and me husband were goin' down Peter Street, we met Pat Welch and his ould stick of a wife; and so we stopped to have a drain, and a spache about Ireland. Biddy Wallis came up, and says she, "Kitty," says she, "you're a talking ov me." "No, Biddy," says I; "divil a word about the likes of yer. Go on, Biddy Wallis, to your own frins;" by which manes, as I'm on me oath, I'll allow she was bastely drunk. "Me sowl to the divil," says Biddy, "if I go till I've had me satisfaction out of the likes av ye." Wid that, yer wertchip, she spit in me face, and I spit in hers. Biddy then made a strik at me, and I went to pacify me childer, as they begun to screech; and then Biddy followed me, clapping her hands as if she was the best woman. Sartinly, when I seen that, I said, "Will any body hold me child? that I may take a comfortable fight;" and whin Pat Welch tuk it, Biddy *legbailed* from me.

*Mr. Chambers.* What did she do?

*Kitty.* Legbailed away into old Bryan's shop. Plase, your hanner, she's always at me to take a fight; and I can't go out of me house for a pail of water, or

a ha'poth of milk, or a pint of beer, or a drop of gin, or any other thing, such as a bit of fish, or a pound of pratees, or a—

*Mr. Chambers.* Come to the assault.

*Kitty.* I'm coming at it, plaze your wertchip. I went wid me bit of frute to me stand, and Biddy came up and exposed me, bekase I would not take a fight there and thin. So I made off home, and thin Biddy jumped in me shallow, and danced on me frute, bekase she couldn't get meself and me six childer to dance on.

*Mr. Chambers.* What did your basket contain?

*Kitty.* Eighteen penn'oth of as fine Kerry pippins as ever came out of the market.

*Mr. Chambers.* Where did you get that black eye from?

*Kitty.* I'll tell no lie about it: I tuk a fight wid Biddy, in at Bryan's, after she had danced like a jack-ass on me frute.

Pat Welch, who was called on behalf of the complainant, after giving his version of the affair, admitted that "Biddy and Kitty both gave their children away, tuk off their caps and shawls, and went and had a comfortable fight together."

*Kitty.* Didn't you hear me blaggarding Biddy Wallis?

*Pat Welch.* No; on my oath, I did not.

*Kitty.* Then you are a false-swearing, perjured, tundering ould thief.

*Mr. Chambers.* Well, Mrs. Wallis, what have you to say?

*Biddy.* She told tales that I had got two blind

bastards, when I never had none but what belonged to me own lawful husband. Bekase she did that same, I sartinly went down on me knees, and prayed a curse on her, by which manes she down'd on her two knees, and hoped I might be brought to bed wid *seven blind monkeys*.

*Mr. Chambers.* You are a pair of silly women. It would be in vain to ask you to keep from fighting—it's meat and drink to you ; but I will keep you, if possible, from breaking the public peace for some time to come by ordering each of you to find bail.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### REFORM SWEEPING.

THE admirers of dry walking in wet weather cannot fail to have remarked the crossing from Oxford Street leading into Soho Square, and to have availed themselves of the advantages it presents to all who prefer clean paths to muddy ones. This crossing for many years was tenanted by a wooden-legged sweeper, who disappeared about a week ago ; the truth must be told—he caught the gin-fever, and after an overdose of his panacea for all complaints, departed this life, bequeathing his broom and crossing to his disconsolate widow. One whole week was given to receiving the condolences of friends and gossips in her husband's favourite dram-shop ; and as the aforesaid condolences came to her mostly in the form of "*kvarterns* and half-*kvarterns*" of "*Old Tom*," it is no libel on her sorrows

to say, that she was so frequently overcome by this mode of consoling her, as to require to be helped home every evening on a stretcher. At the expiration of the week, the widow in weeds and weepers, broom in hand, proceeded to take possession of what she conceived she had an indefeasible and hereditary right to,—her husband's crossing; when, to her unutterable dismay and indignation, she saw a masculine interloper flourishing a broom in her special dominions, and touting for coppers as actively as a pair of bandy legs could be set in motion. She introduced herself to the intruder; she reminded him of her husband's rights and his widow's wrongs; she implored him to drop his tool in some other quarter; but the usurping new-comer was deaf to reason and persuasion. Finding the *suaviter in modo* entirely thrown away, she resorted at once to the *fortiter in re*, and mopping up as much soft mud as her broom would hold, she planted it with a vigorous smack full in her rival's face. Staggered by the suddenness and nature of the assault, the bandy-legged offender could not immediately retaliate; but having at length cleared eyes, nose, and mouth from the mud which choked them up, he clubbed his broom and aimed a blow at the bonnet of his fair assailant with such good will, that, had it taken the intended effect, it would have left him undisputed master of the crossing, but possibly would also have introduced him to twelve honest jurymen and one of her Majesty's wigged and ermined judges. He had, however, reckoned without *his host*; the lady, from much practice in this line with *her dear departed* when their tempers were rendered

rather too lively by gin, had acquired such manual dexterity, that no sooner did the new sweeper lift his broom to lend her a wipe, than she caught the blow on her own handle, returned it with interest, and then raised such a clatter on the pate of her opponent as to cause him to think about the expediency of beating a retreat without the honours of war. The battle was summarily put a stop to by the appearance of a policeman, who took both parties into custody, and introduced them to Mr. Dyer, the sitting magistrate.

It may here be stated that the male defendant, who is known as "Bandy Billy," was decorated with a placard, on which he had dubbed himself "Sweeper to the Princess Victoria and the rest of the Royal Family," solely from the circumstance of having done the honours of a crossing leading into Kensington Gardens, which, on one occasion, had been used by the royal young lady and suite during their matutinal promenade in that suburban locality.

The constable having related to the magistrate the particulars of the charge, the lady, who by right of sex claimed the priority of speaking, here turned on her tears, and in accents of woe sobbed out:

"Oh, yer vership—please yer vership—take a poor vidder under yer pertection. Here's a wag—wag—waggerbon as wants to circumwent a poor lone wid—wid—widder, and rob her afore her face out of her natteral prop—property.

*Mr. Dyer.* Who wants to rob you, and what are you going to be robbed of?

*Widow.* This here war—warmint wants to chisel

me out of my crossing, vich is all as ever my husband left me to get wittles for my young uns.

*Bandy Bill.* 'Tain't yourn more 'an myun. It belongs to any von as nose our business, vich a hoo-man can't never know, and vich your old man didn't know.

*Widow.* Oh, yer vership, he's a scandalising the carratter of my poor dead cripple of a husband wot got six children with a vooden leg.

The defendant here, in vindication, begged to inform the magistrate that the crossing in question had been so neglected of late as to cast a serious blemish on the reputation of crossing-sweepers in general. He had resolved to reform matters, and had already worn out three brooms in his efforts to reëstablish the character of the crossing; and he was on the high road to success, when the appearance of the widow marred his projects for the public interest.

*Bandy Billy.* Look at my badge, yer vership; that vill tell you as I'm a man wot nose his business. A hooman ain't of no use on a crossing,—it's man's work.

*Mr. Dyer.* I do not see any very great difficulty in learning to sweep a crossing.

*Bandy Billy.* No difficulty! yer vership is tee-total mistaken. Vy, a hooman can only do "plain sweeping;" fancy-vork is a cut above her. Then, she can't run afore ladies and children, to perfect them agin the wehicles; and she wouldn't know how to hold up her broom to stop the horses, venhever a hold gentleman wants to be seen safe across. No, no; our

hart is a deal above the reach of any hendiuidual hooman.

The magistrate, however, did not seem to be exactly of this way of thinking. Taking into consideration the claims created by twenty years of public services of the husband, Mr. Dyer intimated to the police that they must not allow the widow to be interfered with in any way likely to produce another breach of the peace.

The widow, in a transport of gratitude, shook her fist at Bandy Billy; and vowed solemnly to the bench that she would stick to the crossing as long as she had an inch of birch to her broom.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE ; OR, BOXING-DAY FROLICS.

JAMES GARDENER, a squab, blear-eyed personage, better known in the polished regions of Duck Lane by his *sobriquet* of "Crackem," was charged with having disregarded the principle of *meum* and *tuum* on boxing-day, in the affair of a greatcoat, alleged to be the property of a gentleman in Regent Street.

The prisoner, prosecutor, and witnesses all being of that honourable "order" in modern classics called "chummies," entered the office with their "sooty honours thick upon them;" and when ranged with due regularity before and behind the bar, were most of them recognised as having, through the active interest taken by the magistrates of Marlborough-Street

Police-Court in some of their little affairs, had the honour of more than one personal introduction to the learned recorder, who, with that consideration and alacrity which distinguish him on all such public occasions, had promptly assigned them a residence in a national establishment abutting on Brixton Rise.

The police-constable who took the charge said the prisoner would answer to no other name than "Crackem," although the fact was notorious this name had been conferred on him in consequence of his well-known skill as a "cracksman."

*Mr. Dyer.* What is your real name, prisoner?

*Prisoner.* Vy, Jim Crackem. It vos Gardiner; but I habdicated that ere name ever since my misforten at the Old Bailey. Bill Smith, wot's a-going to "split" agin me, werry well nose as it's Crackem, cos I vos pardners with him afore he vos prostituted at Clarkenvell for prigging Bob Vite's "kit," besides fippence farden and three screws o' bakker.

The name of "Crackem" having accordingly been inserted in the depositions, Bill Smith was called on for his evidence.

"Please, your right honourable verships," began Bill, making a regular Whitechapel salaam to the bench, "last Vensday as hever vos happened to be boxing-day; and as me and my sister Sal, and Jack Hobson and his'n, vere all out a-boxing in Vestminster, ve tumbled upon Jem Crackem, who stops to vish us all luck; 'for,' says he, 'I'm so preciously out o' luck myself, 'at I ain't picked up a single indiividual copper *his here* blessed day.' Vell, my lords, ve took his case

into consideration ; and ve all on us agreed to be fourpence a-piece, for a pint of gin for the gentlemen and a kvartern of rum-and-srub for the ladies. So ve vere all fourpence accordinglye, and Jim Crackem worn't nuffin. After ve'd drinked all the lickier, I vonted to 'cut my stick;' but Jim ses to me, ses he, 'Bill, I worry much respects you, cos you're a trump ; and, as I hain't sot hies on you since you com'd out of quod' (for, your verships, I'll candidly own 'at I'd the law put upon me for summat wot vos quite t'other), 'so,' sis he, 'I'd stand a pot, and no mistake, pervising as I'd ever a tanner. Howsomever,' ses he, 'though I ain't got a blessed mag, I believe as how I nose vere to pick up a bob,' ses he ; 'if you'll vait in this ere corner,' sis he, 'just by them ere posteses in Regent Street,' ses he, 'I'll go into this here good gemman's crib, and ax him for a box ; and,' ses he, 'Bill,' ses he, 'I nose you're worry fond of vistling ; so if you sees ever a pleseman a-coming, jest give a vistle, and walk away.' 'Werry well,' ses I, 'I don't mind doing that 'ere to hoblege you, if there ain't nuffin wrong in it.' For, your verships, I made up my mind since my last hac-cident at the Bailey" (looking hard at the magistrates) "not to do nuffin but wot's as right as a trivet. 'Honour bright!' ses he, and dives into the house. Vell, my lords and *gentlemen of the jury*, he comes out in a hinstant vith that ere wery hindential coat on his arm ; and, ses he, 'Looke here, Bill ; on'y see vot the good gemman's a guv me for a box ! I'll "spout" it for twelve bob ; so come along ; and as soon as hever *I gets it "shoved up,"* I'll stand a prime "blow-out,"

and no end of lush.' So, your lordships, away ve sherries to Short's Gardens; and as ve passed Jim Harris's crib, Tom cotched a sight on us, and axed us in to have a mouthful of grub. In ve goes; and Jim's hooman being there, he sends her to spout the 'benjamin;' and out of the money Crackem spent three-and-a-tanner for tripe and inguns and a gallon of 'heavy wet.' This here, my lords and *gemmen of the jury*, is all as ever I knows concernin this here transackshun; and I hope the marcy of the court vill take my wife and six helpless babbies under your pertection, and be as light on me"—*recollecting himself*—"axes parding—I mean as light on Jim—as possible; as he's as hinnercent as I am."

*Magistrate.* I suppose it is so customary for you to stand in the same situation as the prisoner in the dock, that an appeal to the jury comes quite natural to you?

*Smith.* Oh, your worship, 'pon my *honour*, kvite different; it vos on'y a bit of "slapsy slingo."

*Prisoner.* I'm too game to split, your vership, 'cause nobody sha'n't never call me (looking at the witness) a "snitch;" but if I did, it would be "all up Bill's back." Ve've been in many a good job together; but mind, ve cuts the pardnership from this here blessed day.

*Magistrate.* The case must stand over for the present, the owner of the coat not being here.

The next hearing produced the committal of the prisoner; but it is due to the well-earned reputation of "*Crackem*" to state that, when before a jury on the charge, he was "honourably acquitted," on account of

the somewhat suspicious share which "Bill Smith," the only witness, appeared to have had in the transaction.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE LAST OF THE FLYING DUSTMEN.

A BRACE of that once celebrated fraternity known as "flying dustmen" were charged with having emptied a dusthole in Frith Street without leave or license of the contractor. The worthies, apparently the last of their race, were not unknown in Old-Bailey annals, and in the palmy days of dust-prigging fearlessly encountered the perils of Tothill Fields and the treadmill in the pursuit of their unlawful vocation. But the days of "dusting on the sly" are rapidly passing away; the transportation of the renowned Bob Bonner, first of "dust prigs," coupled with the great fall in "breeze," has caused this consummation; and a "flying dustman" in a short time bids fair to be as great a rarity as a Red Indian. The pair gave the names of William Neale and Edward Jones; but in the scene of their glory, Duck Lane, were only known as "Pug-nosed Billy" and "Ugly Ned"—*sobriquets* which a single peep at their "phisogs" proclaims at once to be remarkably appropriate. The shovel, sackful of dust, and the policeman's statement, formed an irresistible body of evidence against the culprits.

*Magistrate.* Well, can you give any account of the dust found in your possession?

*Ugly Ned.* Can ve? Yes, yer verships; and a

werry good un too,—sitch a von as vill clear our caric-ters in the hies of every gemman's hindependent mind. Me and my pal vas a valking along Frith Street—he vith his dusting-shovel, and me vith my sack, qvite permixious—ven a genvine lady comes out of a house in a similiar haccident vay, and says she to me, “Dust-man,” says she, “vill you grant me vun pertikler favour?” “Vy, yes, ma’am,” says I; “it’s impossible to refuse vun of the *soft* sex; so I’ll grant it, pervising as you doesn’t ax me to do nuffin but vot’s upright and downstraight.” “I vish I may go to blazes,” says the lady, “if vot I’m going to arks ain’t as right as a trivet. Our dusthole ain’t been hemptied this month, so all the stuff is running into the sile, and stopping up the shewer; and, dustman,” says the lady, “it’s gallus hard lines as ve should be hobblegated to have sitch a muck cos the reg’lar dustman vont do his dooty.” “Vell, ma’am,” says I, “jest to hoblige you, out of genivine good natur, me and my pal here vill consent to clear away the mess, in case you stands a tanner or a drain of short to both on us.” Vell, the lady complies, and has a glass herself ven ve’d done the job.” This here, your verships, is the hidetical facts; and if yer vants hany more hevidence on it, here’s my pal Bill vill take his sacrament hoath; vont you, Bill?

*Pug-nosed Billy.* Blowed if I don’t!

Notwithstanding this *very* satisfactory defence, both prisoners were adjudged to be guilty.

Parliament, in its absolute wisdom, having decreed that the offence was not to be expiated under a fine of 20*l.*, or not less than 10*l.*, and in case of default a

stated period of imprisonment, the bench, thus tied up, were obliged to inflict the lowest fine of 10*l.*, or lowest term, one month with hard labour.

*Magistrate.* Have you got 10*l.*?

"Me got *ten pound*!" said Pug-nosed Bill, holding up his leg, and displaying a large hole in his breeches. "D'yer think as how, if I'd ten *bob*, let alone ten *suffrins*, 'at I wouldn't precious soon mend these here *kicksies* with a pair of new 'uns?"

"Bill," said the other, as he left the bar, "there's a screw loose somewhere, as *vonts* wote by ballast and hannival sufferage, or summat of the sort, to set it right. Vy, prigging dust ain't *half* the crime now it vonce vos, cos the stuff von't fetch *half* as much in the market as it would afore; so ve didn't oughtn't to be knocked down for more 'an *half* the fine. As for hard labour, that's nuffin; for it's hard labour every day in the week vith sitch as us. But never mind; ven ve comes out of *kyod*, ve'll 'flare up and jine the Union.'"

With this sage scrap of consolation, the offenders were locked up.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### DANGERS OF BARTLEMY FAIR.

A LUCKLESS little urchin, whose stature only permitted him to peep under the bar, was charged by his master, a tailor in the Quadrant, with having loitered on an errand last Bartholomew Fair.

*The trembling culprit was one of those friendless*

mortals known as parish apprentices; and having only very recently been emancipated from the monotony of a parish workhouse, every sight was a sort of novelty to him, and manifold and mighty were the temptations which urged him to linger a few minutes when sent out on his master's errands. Having occasion, last Bartlemy Fair-day, while on his way to a customer's shop, to pass near Smithfield, the temptation to deviate from the straight road of Holborn into the crooked path of Long Lane proved too potent for his good resolutions, notwithstanding the oratorical admonition of his master to eschew the perils of the fair, and to return with all speed to the pleasures of the needle. Never having had even a glimpse of this elysium of unbreeched Cockneys, in a luckless hour he allowed his evil genius to prevail; and pitching to the winds all prudent considerations, he strayed from the right road, and in a few minutes found himself in the middle of Smithfield. Assailed on the one hand with the fumes of savoury "hot sassingers" and pressing invitations to "try a dip in the lucky-bag," and lost in speechless wonder at the prodigies performing in front of the show-booths, he allowed an hour to slip away, totally unheeding that one was at home who was

"Gathering his brow like gathering storm,  
And nursing his wrath to keep it warm."

A second hour was fast verging towards completion, when his blissful reveries were suddenly cut short by a thundering kick on the crupper. Looking up, to his horror he perceived his master, with sundry

good-natured intentions in his favour depicted in every feature.

The truant scampered home, and having undergone the probationary punishment of going supperless to bed, he was the following morning brought before the bench, to be dealt with according to his Majesty's will and pleasure.

The friendless little soul pleaded hard for forgiveness, setting forth the irresistible nature of the temptation, never having in all his life been at a fair before; and faithfully promising, if forgiven this time, that when again sent on errands no far-famed possessor of the "seven-leagued boots" should make greater expedition.

The complainant, of whom it may be right to state that he had been several times at the office in matters by no means calculated to favour the presumption that he would prove the most tender-hearted of task-masters, here enumerated a long list of former promises made and broken, and finished by hinting that a mysterious disappearance of "cabbage" had lately occurred.

The worthy magistrate dwelt on the numberless offences laid to the boy's charge; and, peeping into futurity, predicted that the end of such enormities would be fittingly prefigured by a perpendicular post with crossbeam, and parish-apprentice pendent therefrom.

With a view, however, to thwart the possible labours of the "sisters three," the bench decided upon *trying the effect of a week's imprisonment.*

## CHAPTER XL.

## DELICATE SUSCEPTIBILITY.

JIM ROBINSON, a man of colour, and a professor of that science least able to spoil his complexion,—the science of chimney-sweeping,—brought one Mary Coombs, a stalwart basket-woman, before Mr. Dyer for having given him a “good hiding” a few days back.

“Please your *highness*,” began Mr. Robinson, “I hokkepies two front cellars in Winegar Court, and I defy nobody to say as they hever know’d any think good, bad, or indifferent agin my character.”

“Why, you was tried last sessions at the Old Bailey,” interrupted Mrs. Coombs, “for *starring a glaze*, and got knocked down for seven penn’orth.”

“It’s a lie !” roared Mr. Robinson. “I’ll indict you in the county-court for purging yourself afore the magistrate. It’s werry true, your honourable vership, as I vos tried ; but it vos on’y *once*, a werry long time ago, and every body know’d as I vos a perfect hinno-cent. Howsomever, let’s drop [that ’ere bit of non-sense, ’cause it hain’t got nuffen to do with this here present inwestation. I beg leave to say ’at this here good woman, as lives hopposite to my establishment, venhever she sets eyes on my Suke, and my Suke sets hies on her, they makes a reg’lar pint of having a word or two of a sort together. Last Saturday night, just *as me* and my missus vos a-getting a bit of grub, this *here criminal* comes to the head of my cellar, and sings

out, 'Hullo, chummy, here's a customer wants you!' Vell, my lord, I nat'rally valks up the ladder, and shoves my head through the cellar-flap; but afore I know'd vot consarn vos a coming, she cotches hold of my nose and wrings it as dry as a brickbat, without the least pint of ceremony. Then, my lord, she vops away with both her two double fisteses, and thinking she hadn't done enough, she calls out for the broom, that she might give me von for my nob."

"Have you any witnesses to the assault?" inquired Mr. Dyer.

"Have I?" replied Mr. Robinson; "I should think so. I've *fourteen* 'spectable vitnesses houtside, and I'll ax for Bill Vilkins first."

As soon as "Bill Vilkins" entered the office, Mrs. Coombs called out:

"Why, your worship, he ain't only but just come out of Noogit for felony! Ax him who cut his mop last."

"Your vership," replied Bill Vilkins, who did not appear to relish this sample of the defendant's recollection, "I'll admit I *vos* tried, but nobody couldn't prove nothink agin me, and, in course, I vos honourable acquitted. I'll pledge your vership my *sucred honour* it vos on'y a wile attack on my carrecter out of revenge."

Mr. Dyer, on consideration, allowed this "'spectable witness" to tell his story; and finding that it coincided with the complainant's statement, dispensed with the evidence of the other "thirteen."

Mr. Dyer then applied to the defendant for her explanation.

"This here misdemeanour," answered Mrs. Coombs, "is all along of his Sukey."

"Who is this Sukey?" interrogated Mr. Dyer.

"She's my *housekeeper*," replied Mr. Robinson, who evidently wished to be beforehand with his explanation.

"Your housekeeper!" retorted Mrs. Coombs, turning up her nose disdainfully; "she's sitch a housekeeper as no respectable married woman, as I flatters myself your vership takes me to be, wouldn't have no connexion vith, and that's vy she's always a spittin' her spite on me."

Mrs. Coombs then, with that volubility which distinguishes ladies of fishmongering pursuits, proceeded to aver that, in place of having assaulted the complainant, she had herself been assaulted. Had it been otherwise, the complainant would have some marks of her prowess toshow.

"And so I can show my marks," retorted Mr. Robinson; "here's my eye as black as my hat."

"Vy, you're as black as my hat all over," replied Mrs. Coombs.

"Then I sha'n't want no dyeing to make me blackerer," answered Mr. Robinson huffily, who did not appear to like this cut at his complexion. "And vots more, if my skin's black, marm, my conscience is viterer than yourn."

This dialogue, which threatened to be carried on with more emphasis than politeness, was cut short by the *magistrate* directing the defendant to put in bail to *keep the peace*.

## CHAPTER XLI.

## GRAND BOBBERY BETWEEN GRIGGS AND SPRIGGS.

"Happy the man whose heart of such a sort is,  
As holds more buttermilk than aqua fortis."

HAD this valuable maxim been duly impressed on the sensorium of the old gentleman who forms the prominent character in the following case, it might have saved him a good deal of inconvenience, and, what is better, spared the loss of nine good shillings to himself and his heirs for ever. But the Fates having otherwise decreed, the sitting magistrates were called upon to settle a charge of assault, brought by Jonathan Griggs, assistant to Mr. Higgs, against one Solomon Spriggs.

The plaintiff and defendant, both of pigmy breed, presented a curious contrast in person when placed *vis-à-vis* in their respective stations before the bar.

The plaintiff appeared to be somewhere about that particular age at which an aspiring genius shaves, not so much to get *rid* of a beard, as to *get* one. The defendant, in addition to full sixty winters, was very deaf, nearly blind, and worked his way into the office on a wooden leg.

The plaintiff, who evidently considered himself as no "small beer," set forth that his master dealt in all those commodities commonly found in the shop of an oilman. On the day of the alleged assault, while busied in serving a pennyworth of patent starch to a female customer, the old gentleman popped into the shop,

and, in a towering passion, demanded the instant surrender of two bundles of wood. He was referred to the state of the account between Higgs and Spriggs; whereupon, with augmented choler, he again asked for the two bundles, vowing, if they were withheld, he would publish Mr. Higgs and all his progeny throughout the parish as a confederacy of "rogues, rascals, and robbers." Up to this point, according to the complainant's own statement, his equanimity remained undisturbed, and he went on, with his customary coolness, with his starch-supplying labours; but when the special epithet of "ugly jackanapes" reached his tympanum, flesh and blood could no longer bear it; so, running round the counter, he told the old gentleman, that for daring to apply such an inappropriate epithet to him, had he not laboured under the disadvantage of a timber leg, he would certainly have brought the toe of his Wellington in contact with the seat of the traducer's breeches. The peppery old gentleman, nothing daunted by the belligerent aspect of the complainant, flourished his umbrella, and in *carte* and *tierce* fashion fenced the complainant into a corner, and finally capsized him into the treacle-tub by a whack on the head somewhere in the region of the bump of benevolence.

The defendant peeped fiercely through his spectacles at the complainant all the time the complaint was being made; and when called upon for his defence, began by admitting there was a sort of running account of soap candles, small-beer, brick-dust, &c. between the *Griggses* and the *Higgses*.

On the morning of the alleged assault, in place of sending, according to custom, for a penny bundle of wood, he desired to be furnished with a *whole* shilling's-worth.

"Had I sent for a single penny bundle," continued Mr. Spriggs, rising in wrath, "I should have expected only *one*; but sending, as I did, for an entire shilling's-worth, I was fairly entitled, by all the rules of equity and justice between man and man, to those additional bundles furnished to persons taking large quantities. Will your worship credit it, that I counted the bundles myself when they came in; I called my wife and family to count them,—here they are as witnesses in case of need,—and I solemnly assure your worships, on the faith of a man, there were but *twelve* bundles. Now I'll venture to affirm boldly and advisedly, that there is not a tradesman between Whitechapel Church and Hyde-Park Corner—nay, in all Great Britain, and Ireland to boot—who would not have cheerfully sent *fourteen* for the shilling. I instantly took my hat and umbrella, and walked towards Mr. Higgs's shop, with the full determination of obtaining my *two* bundles, or of entering my firm remonstrance against such an unheard-of proceeding. When I got to the shop, I mildly asked for my two bundles. I implored, I entreated; but in vain. Then giving way to the natural indignation—and your worship must own I had ample cause—which I felt, I own I might, in the heat of the moment, have said something about "never allowing myself to be made the victim of unparalleled plunder and wholesale robbery." Instead, however, of giving me

my two bundles, the shopman came round and began to show fight. Every man has a right to protect his own person; every man has a right to use his umbrella if his person is attacked. I did that only which every man has a right to do; I did no more than every Englishman would have done."

The complainant here stated to the bench that the irritable defendant more than once had created a disturbance in his master's shop.

"Why don't Mr. Higgs pay for his breeches?" said the old gentleman angrily; "why don't he pay me for the coat I made him?"

*Shopman.* You've had double the value of the breeches in pickles and mould-candles; and as for the coat, it was returned to you.

*Defendant.* Yes, it was returned; but what use was it to me? The coat was made for Mr. Higgs, who is short, stout, and pot-bellied. It will fit Mr. Higgs, but nobody else in the parish.

The complainant here stated that he had a witness present who could speak as to the violence of the blow with the umbrella. He was called forward, and asked by the complainant if he didn't see the defendant give him a "regular whop" with his umbrella.

*Boy.* It warn't exactly a "reg'lar whop."

*Complainant.* Now, wasn't it a "rum un"?

*Boy.* No, it wasn't a "rum un" either.

*Magistrate.* Well, what sort of blow do you think it was?

*Boy (considering).* Vy, it vos vot I should call a "tidy crack."

The "tidy-crack" testimony turned the tables in favour of the complainant; and the bench, after admonishing the old gentleman to keep a guard over the sallies of his temper for the future, inflicted a fine of 5*s.* and costs,—together 9*s.*

"Nine shillings!" said the astounded Mr. Spriggs; "then of course I may deduct for my two bundles?"

The deduction, however, was not allowed; and maugre the defendant's protestations, he was obliged to "fork out" the whole amount, which he did shilling by shilling, with just the air of a man having so many of his teeth drawn.

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## CHAPTER XLII.

### DOG FANCYING; OR, INJURED INNOCENCE.

BOB PICKERING, short, squat, and squinting, with a yellow "wipe" round his "squeeze," was put to the bar on violent suspicion of dog-stealing.

Mr. Davis, silk-mercier, Dover Street, Piccadilly, said: "About an hour ago, while sitting in my parlour, I heard a loud barking noise, which I was convinced was made by a favourite little dog, my property. I went out, and in the passage I caught the prisoner in the act of conveying the dog into the street in his arms."

*Mr. Dyer.* What have you to say? You are charged with attempting to steal the dog.

*Prisoner* (affecting a look of astonishment). Vot, *me steal* a dog! Vy, I'm ready and villing to take

my solomon hoath 'at I can't be convicted of sitch a crime. Here's the *factotal* of the consarn, as true as I'm a honest man, as never eats a penny buster afore he's yarnt it honourable. I vos a coming along Hoxfud Street ven I seed this here poor dumb hanimal a running about with nobody arter him, and a looking jest as if he vos complete lost. Vile I vos in this here sittiwation, a perfect gentleman comes up to me, and says to me, "Vot a blessed shame," says he, "that ere handsome young dog should be without a nateral pertecter! I'm blowed, young man," says he, "if I vos you, if I wouldn't pick it up, and pervent the vehicles from a hurting on it; and," says he, "I'd advise you, 'cause you look so *werry honest* and so werry respectable, to take pity on the poor dumb hanimal, and go and buy it a ha'porth of wittles." Vell, my lord, you see I naterally complied with his demand, and vos valking away vith it to look out for a prime bit of bow-wow grub, ven up comes this here good gentleman, and vonts to swear as how I was arter *prigging* on it!

*Mr. Dyer.* How do you get your living?

*Prisoner.* Vorks along vith my father and mother, and lives vith my relations, wots pertickler respectable.

*Mr. Dyer.* Policeman, do you know any thing of the prisoner?

*Policeman.* The prisoner's three brothers were transported last session, and his mother and father are now in Clerkenwell. The prisoner has been a dog-stealer for years.

*Prisoner.* Take care vot you say; if you proves

your vords, vy my carrecter vill be hingered, and I'm blowed if you sha'n't get a "little vun in" ven I comes out of *quod*!

*Mr. Dyer.* What is the worth of the dog?

*Mr. Davis.* It is worth five pounds, as it is of a valuable breed.

*Prisoner.* There, your vership, you hear it's a waluable dog—now, is it feasible as I should go for to prig a dog wot wos a waluable hanimal?

The magistrate appeared to think such an occurrence was not at all unlikely, as he committed him to prison for three months.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### A TERRIBLE TURK.

MR. and Mrs. Picaree—a comical couple, fat and fierce-looking—charged a pretty little boy, not yet breeched, with having broken one of their shop-windows with a marble.

The Lord Mayor, who heard the charge, could not refrain from smiling at the ludicrous circumstance of being called on to put the law in force against the chubby-cheeked culprit, who sat on a high stool in front of the dock, between a couple of constables, contentedly sucking a lollipop, and wholly unconscious of the grave process which was in operation against him.

Mr. Picaree, a ginger-whiskered tailor, evidently treated the affair as any thing but a joke; and darting an angry look at the little boy, handed over to the Lord Mayor a roll of paper, with the request that the

particulars therein might be publicly perused; "and then," said Mr. Picaree, shaking his head wrathfully at the unbreeched defendant, "your lordship, after reading this unwarnished statement of facts, will clearly see the melancholy situation of me and Mrs. P., my wife, from the atrocious persecution pursued by the prisoner and his playmates against us."

The "plain statement" was as follows:

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—While me and Mrs. P. was a-sitting down last Wednesday to a biled nuckle of weal and new taters, we heard a tremenjous crack backerds, which so alarmed me that I upset the butter-boat on my bran-new carpet; and when I rushed out to scrutinise into the cause of the explosion, I found a marble lying in my shop, and one of the winders cracked above *two* inches. Mrs. P. and me measured the crack this morning, and found it had extended to *three* inches; and we are in daily expectation that in progress of time it will reach all the way up to the top. Now, my lord, me and Mrs. P. are morally convinced that Harry Barr, the prisoner, who is upwards of three years last birthday, was the criminal; and we soon ascertained it beyond a dout, for we see him come out of his mother's house with something like a lump of pudding in a cloth, and stand directly opposite, facing our winder, with a guilty look. When I asked Mrs. Barr to pay for the winder, she told me to kiss the little boy's—*head's antipodes*! Oh, my lord, this is only *a portion* of what we constantly suffer from this Harry Barr and his playmates. They pitches perriwinkles

and bits of backer-pipes from secret places into our shop, and repeatedly frightens Mrs. P. into a state of suspended anxiety. Me and Mrs. P. never was advocates for *sanguinary* punishments, but we both on us think that it is a duty we owe to society at large to have this hordashious young boy made a proper example on for the benefit of the rising generation.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,—An Act of Parliament ought to be got to put down such a constant serious of outrages on people's persons and properties; for if they are suffered to continue, there must be an end of all civil society, and we might as well dissolve into a nation of cannibals and Hoppintops.

"On the truth of the above facts me and Mrs. P. are ready to seal with a solemn oath."

"Mrs. P.," said Mr. Picaree, after the Lord Mayor had glanced over the paper,—“my dear Mrs. P., come forward and produce the marble, and let his lordship ask the young criminal, on his oath, if it isn't his property.”

"Here it is, my dear," said Mrs. P., handing out a marble. "The backer-pipes and perriwinkle-shells I chucked into our dusthole."

*Mr. P.* (angrily). That's jest like one of your stupid tricks.

*Mrs. P.* *Mr. P.* !

*Mr. P.* Yes, Mrs. P., your stupid tricks. The backer-pipes would have been valuable evidence. But *you think of nothing else except stuffing and guzzling.*

*Mrs. P.* Mr. P.!

*Mr. P.* Why couldn't you bring the perriwinkles with you to show his lordship? I'm ashamed on you.

The Lord Mayor, much to the mortification both of Mr. and Mrs. P., cut short further altercation by directing the mother of the child to carry him home, and if he acted rudely again, to correct him with a halfpenny rod.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

### PROJECTS FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

A VENERABLE old lady, wearing green spectacles, and, in addition to a dress of the old Queen-Charlotte fashion, decorated with several French medals—the *Légion d'Honneur*, and other military orders—introduced herself to Mr. Dyer as the Marchioness de Broglie Solari, and begged permission to be allowed to address the bench on a subject of the highest public importance.

Mr. Dyer having politely signified his willingness to listen, the old lady dropped a court curtsy, and then commenced by saying that her sensibilities had been much affected lately at the melancholy details of hydrophobia which the public prints usually presented during the prevalence of warm weather; and as she was in the possession of an effectual plan—acquired while residing with her departed spouse, a Venetian plenipotentiary—for the summary extirpation of this puzzling disorder, she considered it was but due to an enlight-

ened and a liberal public to make her project immediately known.

Her plan was, for her Majesty's Ministers immediately to order *every* housekeeper in the metropolis, on pain of instant punishment, to place a *pail of water* and a *stick of brimstone* at his door; so that, on the least tendency towards the much-dreaded attack, the canine sufferers had only to run to the bucket, and ease themselves and the public of their well-founded fears.

This arrangement, she assured the magistrate, had been acted upon by the Venetian authorities; and so well had it answered, that hydrophobia was not only entirely extinguished, but a remarkable activity had been communicated to the brimstone market. She was unable to repress her astonishment when she reflected that a plan so *very simple* and so particularly effectual had not long ago been adopted in the British metropolis; and she considered that she was only discharging a great public duty in thus coming forward and communicating her project, and the easy way of performing it.

Mr. Dyer hinted just a trifling doubt as to the possibility of such a plan answering the intended purpose; and then very good-humouredly complimented the old lady on the public spirit displayed in her communication.

The old lady, quite charmed with the magistrate's urbanity, said she had another *equally practicable* project for reducing the price of fish. The Grand Duke of Florence, when she was residing in that city, finding that the fishermen would not lower their exorbitant

prices, ordered that the fish-market should remain open for the sale of fish only so long as the fishermen could stand in winter with *one* leg in a pail of *cold* water, and in summer with *both* in a tub of scalding *hot* water. The fishermen, rather than have their legs frozen in winter and boiled in summer, sold their fish as rapidly as possible, and at reasonable prices, very much to the satisfaction of customers. Now, were a plan of this remarkably practicable character adopted at Billingsgate, it would have, she was convinced, a surprising effect on the price both of sprats and mackerel.

Mr. Dyer, having observed that he was of opinion all projects for the public good deserved encouragement, politely wished the old lady good morning; and the old lady, with a profound curtsy, left the office.

At the door, her ladyship handed about a printed prospectus, announcing "That a descendant of the great Chancellor Hyde, now in her eightieth year, was about to publish a domestic novel, by subscription, entitled, *The Miseries of Mad Dogs; or, the Triumphs of Innocence and Virtue*; and also a selection of original music, composed expressly for her Royal Highness the Princess Victoria and his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge; together with an authentic illustration of the most eminent personages who have cultivated the mysteries of melody, and a full-length portrait of the late immortal Ponytowskiowski, last king of the Poles, and a kit-cat of the authoress."

The prospectus concluded with this sublime *strophe* :

"Eternal Father of merit ! if, among the numerous gifts in store for me, Thou wilt plentifully pour out the boon of inspiration from the Muse's fund, hear me ! Let it be the oak-cleaving thunderbolt, or red, vivid lightning ; and not the timid ray of tender twilight that glimmers and glooms, and then dies away into darkness and destruction."

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## CHAPTER XLV.

## THE QUEEN'S BENCH IN THE OLDEN TIME.

SINCE the law of arrest was changed, the Queen's Bench has lost much of its former glories. The Marshalsea, the Fleet, have bodily disappeared, and the Queen's Bench is but the shadow of its former self ; nevertheless it still contains much that will repay a visit, much that will interest philanthropists,—not however, of that school which Canning immortalised in his *Needy Knife-Grinder*. I had paid more than one visit to the place to advise or assist some friend whose tailor had been more than ordinarily obdurate, or who had to pay vicariously the penalty of libel, when I stumbled upon a "fast young swell" of the day, whose erratic movements had been at last "cabin'd, cribbed, confined," by the four walls of "Tenterden Park." After a few words of recognition, we were soon on intimate terms. Knowing that my acquaintance possessed considerable descriptive talent, I hinted to him that he could not employ his leisure-hours more advantageously than in enlightening the outer world as to inner life in

the Bench. He undertook the task, and sent me the *Ms.*, modestly saying nothing of the preliminary "writ," but plunging at once in *medias res*:

"The cab stopped in the Southwark-Bridge Road, by the side of a dingy brick wall. The tipstaff got out first; I followed through a sort of doorway into a paved courtyard, which we crossed; up a few stone-steps into a lobby, where, in a sort of pew to the left, sat an unmistakable turnkey, whose sallow, square, saturnine countenance, fringed with dark whisker, looked like a stone visage in an iron frame. His business was to 'take the likeness' of new-comers.

"'Good morning, Mr. Bar,' said the tipstaff. 'This is Mr. Harrison.'

"Mr. Bar muttered a sort of grunt, entered my name in a book, and, after keeping his hard eye fixed on me for some time, thrust a key in a black door, unlocked and opened it. I passed through, followed by tipstaff. Down another short flight of stone steps; across a small yard into a lobby: through swing-doors into another lobby, where stood, staring and stout, a jolly old gaoler, quite a contrast to the first. I was introduced by name to this official also. I was then told I might have a pint of wine if I wished. I gave the order, and was charged three shillings for the same, after being told that the wine would be sent to the 'receiving-ward.' The rubicund turnkey thrust one of his keys into a door which opened upon a spacious enclosure, and I was at last 'IN THE BENCH.' I gazed around with astonishment, dashed with a spica

of sheepishness and fear. It was not at all the sort of place I expected to see; it appeared to be an extensive sort of courtyard, gravelled all over. On the right was a high wall, marked out for four large racket-courts; on the left, a terrace with a good stone pavement running the whole length of it. Such was my first glance; and the scene before my eyes by no means conveyed the idea that I was in a 'prison.'

"It brought to my mind the recollection of a large public school where I had passed many happy days. And boys, too, were there at play with bats and balls, shouting and calling, and laughing merrily. I could hardly believe that I was in a prison, and that these apparently happy people were my fellow-prisoners.

"But I looked at the high walls with spikes at the top. I glanced at some of the windows to my left—they were barred; and through those bars gray-bearded, strange-looking men gazed with longing envy at the racket-players. What could be the meaning of this? These men behind the barred windows of the west wing—why were they set apart from the rest? Was there, then, a prison within a prison? I stood at the corner near the door by which I had entered, and amused myself with watching the racket-players, until I was startled by the loud clang of a bell close to me.

"My school-days were again brought vividly before my mind,—that school-bell whose familiar and unpleasant sound had so often interrupted us in the middle of a good game to summon us to dry study. I heard it once more. It seemed to produce a somewhat similar effect upon the grown men before me.

They suddenly ceased playing, and rushed towards the spot where I was standing.

"But it appeared that the study to which they were summoned was the reverse of dry. It was the 'beer-bell' which had rung; and I, it turned out, was stationed just by the 'tap.' There was a tremendous clattering of pots and cans; and I found myself suddenly surrounded by a thirsty crowd, reeking with perspiration, and evidently capable of absorbing any quantity of their favourite beverage.

"Here and there amidst the throng I recognised familiar faces; men whom I had known casually 'about town,' and whose disappearance from their usual places of resort I had sometimes remarked,—the mystery was now solved,—but from whose present appearance it was evident that the glories of 'swell-dom' had long since departed. One or two gave me a shy nod of recognition; and I noticed that others slunk away, as if ashamed to be seen, not being quite sure whether I was a visitor or a prisoner.

"'Halloa, Harrison, old boy! how are you?' said a somewhat bloated-looking individual, speaking with a strong Irish accent. I remembered him immediately as a scion of the Irish aristocracy, whom I had known slightly a year or two previously.

"'How do, Howick?' I said, in a rather constrained manner, as his cordiality was scarcely warranted by our previous acquaintance, and I had been cautioned about making sudden intimacies.

"'From Slowman's, or Whitecross Street?'

"'Slowman's.'

“‘Do you know if Jack Spendall was there?’

“‘No; I only remained for two or three hours, and had a private room.’

“‘Heavy detainers?’

“‘More than I can pay.’

“‘Going through the Court?’

“‘That depends: if I can’t get out in any other way.’

“‘Well, my boy, at any rate you’ll come and dine with an old pall; any one will show you my room,—4 in 3,—half-past six, sharp time.’

“I accepted his invitation, and went back to the receiving-ward to wash my hands and face, and to see the place where I was to pass my first night in durance vile.

“The receiving-ward was a kind of guard-room in appearance, whose vaulted roof and plain rough wooden furniture gave it a most dull and dungeon-like aspect; so that, seeing my pint of port on the table, I drank one or two glasses, to keep away the blue devils. A tapping noise made me turn round; the window close to me was lifted up, disclosing to view a small courtyard, and two pale-faced wretches, pressing their faces against the bars, imploringly asked for a glass of wine. They looked so famished and careworn, and asked in so humble a manner, that I was moved to compassionate their condition, and I gave them bottle, glass, and all, which they seized with avidity, and disappeared. The window looked into the yard of one of the inner prisons.

“*It being near the dinner-hour which Captain*

Howick had named, I started in quest of his apartment. He had said he lived at 4 in 3. I asked the turnkey what this meant. He informed me that the different staircases were numbered like houses; and that Captain Howick lived at No. 4 room in No. 3 staircase, at the other side of the chapel, the chapel being the centre of the terrace. So I proceeded to No. 3 staircase, up a long flight of steps, then over a long landing, then up another flight, and over another landing, until I came to No. 4 room on the second-floor. The door was open, and I entered. Howick welcomed me with good-natured hospitality. I was rather surprised at the interior. The floor was covered with a Turkey carpet; the ceiling was papered with a tasteful pattern; the walls were covered with light blue. On the mantelpiece was a cover of crimson cloth, studded with gilt nails, and surmounted by a chimney-glass in a gilded frame. There was an inner door, covered with the same cloth as the mantelpiece; handsome curtains and cornice to the window; a large sofa, which served as a bed at night; a small chest of drawers; and, what I certainly did not expect to see, a piano. The dinner-table, of tolerable size, was ready-laid for four. The appearance of the place was very comfortable; and a box of mignonette on the window-sill perfumed the apartment in a most agreeable manner. There were not many rooms like this. Funds—from what quarter I could not learn—were never wholly wanting. We had fish and fowl, and *another* course, exceedingly well cooked. The two *other* guests who made up the party were jolly fellows;

and I must say I enjoyed my dinner and my company. Several droppers-in after dinner soon filled the small room. One played the piano like a professor; another the violin with taste; then songs and choruses, in which all joined; and it was with much regret I found I was obliged to go away early, having to sleep in the receiving-ward, which is always shut up at nine o'clock. I was tired out with the excitement of the day, and glad to get to bed; and had hardly laid down, when I fell fast asleep.

"I had indulged rather too freely in strong drinks, partaken of on my journey from Slowman's to the 'Bench,' and also at Howick's hospitable table; and, in fact, I felt that curious-parched-unquenchable sort of thirsty feeling bibulously termed 'hot coppers.' So I commenced a pilgrimage in search of the kitchen. I inquired the way of one of the 'early birds,' and, according to his direction, went through a lobby at the east end of the parade, and turned to the left, which led to the 'county side.'

"The contrast between the 'county,' the back, and the front, is very remarkable.

"The same difference is observable that exists between the front of houses looking into a West-End square, and the back looking into the mews; the front tolerably cheerful and pleasant—the back gloomy, with the high walls very near the windows of the rooms. Debtors who receive an allowance from the 'county' live on this side. Before they can receive this dole, an affidavit is necessary, to the effect that the recipient *is not worth 5*l*.* Then 5*s.* is allowed per week for the

first six months, which is reduced to 3s. 6d. after that period. In addition to this, their room is furnished with the same kind of furniture used in the receiving-ward—a comfortable bed, a table, and chair, and in the winter one cwt. of coals a week. There are also donations of money, bread, and meat, which they have the benefit of occasionally—no bad thing when ‘hard up.’ Every morning, from nine till three, they are permitted to exercise themselves in the front, one racket-court, known as the ‘County Court,’ being for their exclusive use; but they do not avail themselves very much of it—a remnant of pride forbids. After three, they are restricted to the narrow space between the houses and wall at the back. A chum informed me that it was against the rules to enter the precincts of the ‘county;’ and there being no inducement, I turned in the opposite direction, where a baker’s shop is located, next door to that the kitchen, which was large and convenient.

“The only persons there were the cook-maid and a young sprig of the dandy family, with dark moustache, who seemed to be making love to her, and who looked at me with a rather impertinent air, as much as to say, ‘What do you want here? Don’t try to poach on my manor.’ I stated the object of my visit, and was told in a very off-hand manner that it was too early to have tea made; but that if I would go back to the receiving-ward, it would be brought to me as soon as the proper time arrived. I was obliged to content myself with this promise, and went back to the place *I had started from*, and stood at the door, gazing in

the direction of the kitchen with thirsty expectation. The first person who attracted my attention was an individual in the garb of the conventional stage countryman, who appeared to be very industriously employed in filling water-cans, &c. He was the only being visible at this hour. I became better acquainted with him afterwards. He was a somewhat singular character, an ignorant, hard-headed, honest clod, who had become involved in some law-proceedings solely through his own obstinacy.

"By hardworking industry he had maintained himself, and saved money during an imprisonment of twelve years: he informed me once, in confidence, that he had lost upwards of 100*l.* in bad debts since he had been there.

"He was too proud to dun his fellow-prisoners if they did not pay him his well-earned money, but looked on them with contempt.

" 'There he goes !' would he say, when some debtor of his had got his discharge, and was going away without paying him. 'He calls hisself a gentleman; so don't oi.'

"He had a strong antipathy to the governor, and, after his liberation, brought an action against him for some imaginary damage.

"However, he cleaned my boots and windows very well; and I had never any occasion to complain of my fellow-prisoner 'Horney.'

"It was now about eight o'clock—the time when the gates were opened to visitors.

"The charwomen began to arrive one by one.

These are engaged, at the rate of 3s. 6d. a week, to make beds, clean rooms, and go on errands, &c. There was as yet no appearance of any of the inhabitants. Early rising was evidently not fashionable. Much to my delight, I observed the cook-maid, with my breakfast, coming from the farthest end of the parade. I welcomed the advent of the teapot with great satisfaction, and drank my first cup of the soothing beverage it contained with great relish, for reasons aforesaid. I looked at my watch (I was a fresh arrival); it pointed to the hour of nine, and at the same moment the nine-o'clock bell rung to give notice to the county prisoners that they might avail themselves of the front part of the building if they chose. Soon after, the pavement—or 'parade,' as it is called—was thronged with beings of every possible degree of seediness.

"I suppose I looked like a new-comer; for one queer-faced old man came up to me, and said:

" 'Did you come in last night?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'What do you think of the place?'

" 'It seems comfortable enough for a prison.'

" 'Ah! when you have been here as long as I have, you won't think it very comfortable. Are you in for much?'

" 'Yes; a good deal.'

" 'Going through the Court?'

" 'Perhaps.'

" 'Well, if you are, I hope you won't go before Mr. Commissioner Law; he is always sending people up *there*.'

"As he spoke, he pointed to the barred windows above the receiving-ward which I had observed on my first entrance.

"What is that place?" said I, with curiosity.

"That is No. 10 staircase—the "Remand Ward." They send fellows there if they will not file a schedule, or if remanded under the Discretionary Clause. That's a wrinkle, my friend.'

"It's a wretched place,' remarked I, with a foreboding shudder.

"There ain't a worse place in the world. They only allow you a pint of beer a day; and you can't get a drop more.'

"(This seemed to be the acmè of dreadful punishment, according to my communicative friend's ideas.)

"Do you see that old fellow painting the bars of his window? That's old Downing. He's been there twenty-five years, because he won't file his schedule.'

"I looked, and beheld a strange-looking old skeleton, dressed in a suit of canvas; his long, thin, gray hair straggling about his face, his finger-nails like birds' claws. He was amusing himself by painting the inside of his bars and window with white paint.

"Can he have been there so long?"

"There are two or three who have been here longer. Yonder old man, in the blue greatcoat, has been in prison forty years; he came here from Winchester; his name is Miller. And, again, there's old Cantlin, been thirty years or more in prison,'—pointing to a curious little old man in knee-breeches and a

steeple-crowned hat, the fashion of whose garments seemed of a remoter date than the period of his incarceration. 'But the oldest prisoner is Dufresne; he has been here nearly fifty years.'

"These old fellows get on very well in the infirmary, where they have a great many comforts.

"One of the turnkeys now came to introduce me to my room. He presented me with a copy of the 'Rules and Regulations,' a ticket on which was the number of room and staircase, and the key, and duly installed me in my new lodging—a small, square, clean, white-washed apartment, looking upon the racket-courts; no bars to the window, and nothing to pay for rent.

"I was importuned by two or three people who let furniture suitable for the rooms at sums varying according to the articles supplied; and I soon agreed with a respectable, stout female, wearing blue spectacles, to supply me with every thing I required for the moderate sum of 8s. per week.

"I then engaged a charwoman for 3s. 6d. per week, to make my bed, clean the room, &c. These arrangements being concluded, and the furniture being placed, sitting down and contemplating the small space where I was to reside, free from intrusion, during my stay at 'this little place in Surrey,' I began to feel resigned to the situation, and expected to derive amusement from observing the manners and customs of the new society with which my fate had brought me in contact.

"'Just lend me a pound, old fellow; quick, my boy!' said Howick, rushing into my room in a hurry,

as if he had not time to wait a moment, and conveying the idea that the money was only required for a minute or two.

"I was startled into immediate compliance with the request; and it was not until he had gone away with the money that it struck me as being rather an odd proceeding. Experience taught me that it was one of the 'dodges' of the place.

"If you are known to have money, your fellow-prisoners being 'hard up,' they have the oddest way of asking you for it. They ambush themselves in the doorways, and suddenly pounce upon you with a hurried, startled, 'just-lend-me-for-a-minute' sort of a way, which must be effective, I suppose, sometimes.

"Occasionally a man would rush into my room before I was out of bed for the purpose of borrowing a shilling; and you would think, from his hurried manner, that his liberation almost depended upon his receiving that shilling immediately.

"My purse was always open to assist those I thought deserving, as far as I was able; but I never encouraged these 'artful dodgers.' I invariably said I had no change.

"A bright morning in June—the order of the day is sauntering in the sun, lazily and listlessly lounging along in every kind of free-and-easy costume, smoking, laughing, chatting—every inmate seemed to have no 'care,' maugre the four walls topped with spikes. Easy-chairs were brought out and placed wherever the shade happened to be at the time; and it was

curious to observe in sunny weather how the row of chairs gradually described the circuit of the building during the day. For as the shade shifted, so did the sitters; and a curious observer could generally tell the time by noticing the position of the chairs.

"A match was made at rackets between two young players. This seemed to produce a little excitement. The chairs were brought near the court where the game was to be played. Bets were made freely, but, as the course of my experience proved, not always punctually paid.

"After a few games, the one-o'clock beer-bell was heard. This is the grand event of the day. The thirsty souls long impatiently for the sound of this bell. Some do not get up till it rings. Several, I believe, get up, come down for their beer, and go back to bed again.

"However this may be, there is a general rush of all sorts—gentle and simple, rich side and county side—when the welcome sound is heard. A crowd surrounds the tap on this its first opening. No beer can be had before one o'clock.

"Every man is allowed one quart of beer per day, or one pint of wine; no spirits, unless by the order of the doctor.

"This is the liveliest and most crowded *réunion* of the inmates of 'Spike Island;' and any visitor looking in between one and two will realise the truth of my observations.

"A curious motley multitude are assembled at this moment in the corner by the tap and post-office.

"Every class of English society has its representative, from the highest to the lowest.

"The brother of a haughty Premier (I wrote this some years ago) is now standing by the side of an insolvent clown.

"A viscount is drinking from the same pewter pot which a bankrupt butcher has had a pull at. Honourables, baronets, military men, naval officers, barristers in dirty dressing-gowns, seedy solicitors, actuaries, clergymen, doctors, bank-directors, duffers of all kinds, butchers, bakers, and candlestick-makers are all brought together by the levelling potency of Barclay and Perkins's 'Entire.' There is generally a German baron, a French count, a well-known old Greek, one or two Americans, a black man, a Jew or two—in fact, all sorts and conditions of men; a little world, whose ideas soon become narrowed and contracted, and whose minds are principally concentrated upon the daily incidents which happen within the walls. Gossip and scandal are rife in the Bench.

"A man soon becomes isolated from the world without if he remains there long. Body, soul, and circumstances become hopelessly deteriorated. His friends for the first few weeks visit him, but soon get tired, and in most cases gradually leave off coming. And then he soon makes acquaintance with fellow-prisoners whose society is agreeable.

"It is dull to feed alone; so one or two sociable companions sitting together, an arrangement is made to mess in company alternately in each other's rooms.

"In that sequestered society the social qualities of

the different members are soon estimated at their real value.

"In no situation in life does a man find his true level sooner than in the 'Bench.' It is a school of adversity in which all are on a footing of equality. And perhaps he whose social position has been the most elevated in the great free world without is the most despised of this little world within.

"The three-o'clock bell rings to send the county prisoners to their limited accommodation at the back. When they have made their exit, the Bench is much quieter.

"After all, one might be in many a worse situation. If one feels inclined for society, he can find it at the foot of his staircase. Wishing to be alone, one has only to lock the door, or, in college phraseology, 'sport the oak,' and he is encased in his private apartment, quiet and unmolested.

"Should strong exercise be requisite, in the racket-court beneath is found the finest and most exhilarating game that can be desired. This, however, may be very well for a short time; but soon the sharp longings for liberty embitter every pleasure, and render a man—especially a young man—unable thoroughly to enjoy any thing, except by fits and starts; and he gradually sinks into a state of dejection, and perhaps, by the influences of smoke and drink, acquires degrading habits, which unfit him for any respectable position when he obtains his liberation.

"An altercation between two men who were standing by rather surprised me.

"The foulest language, the vilest epithets, the most tremendous oaths, proceeded from the mouth of one. My astonishment was occasioned by the information that the utterer of this farago of abominations was a clergyman, filthily dirty in his person, foul-mouthed as the lowest scum.

"This degraded priest had sunk to the lowest depths of depravity and poverty. Without a shirt to his back, and it was said without any furniture in his room, he was still too proud to go to the county-side, where he would have been provided at least with common necessities. It is a pity pride did not prevent him from using language which would have disgraced a bargee; and yet, not very long before, he had been the greatest clerical dandy in the place.

"It is the usual course of events.

"The prisoner is brought in fresh from the 'West End,' attired in the most fashionable garments of the day, with money in his pocket, and expensive, and probably unpaid-for, trinkets of every kind dangling about him.

"He at first lives luxuriously; gives breakfast-parties and dinner-parties, sometimes sent from Gunter's. These are good times for the fortunate former acquaintances of the new-comer, who rush to welcome and introduce him to the mysteries of the place, and in return live on their 'friend,' as long as money or profusion lasts. The coming-in of any one with money causes a great excitement among an expectant few, who, I believe, would absolutely 'starve' if it were not for the occasional new blood thus infused. And very

possibly these men were pounced upon and fleeced in a similar manner, after they became legally entitled to a lodging in this locality.

"But such good 'swims' (to use the Q.B. slang) seldom last long; the stock of money is rapidly squandered, and no fresh supplies arrive. Gradually the dangling trinkets disappear. The envious feelings of the seedy are no longer provoked by the frequent changes of apparel. The clothes have gone to keep company with the jewelry.

"Those who fed upon the prodigal, now that his funds are exhausted, have left him to look for other prey; and if he gets into conversation with those who perhaps might have warned him in time (but whom he has been carefully prevented from speaking to whilst his money lasted), he will complain of sums of money borrowed by *soi-disant* and fugitive friends 'just for a minute,' and will probably wish to become a borrower in his turn; and as he rapidly descends the ladder, the dirty, unshaven, seedy-looking sloucher of to-day is the dandy comer of a few months ago.

#### " FIVE-O'CLOCK BEER-BELL.

"Tap open from five to six.

"Tap surrounded. People rather more select than at one. No county prisoners. This is the second grand parade of the visitors at 'Hudson's Hotel.' Standing in the favourite corner in knots are seen the regular inmates, scandalising each other, and quizzing strangers who happen to come in."

"After strangers are 'rung out,' and the prisoners

left to themselves, it may be presumed that all the horrors of solitude, of uncertainty, and of prospects of future poverty on liberation, visit them. This is not so generally; it may be so in an exceptional case, but that even is a rare one. The evening is the jolliest time of the day. Parties meet in each other's rooms to gamble, to drink, to smoke, and to chat. In some rooms a free-and-easy is established, where singing and recitation of no contemptible character are nightly heard. In more retired rooms a 'whistling' or 'tape' shop is set up, in contravention of the rules of the prison. 'Tape' is gin, and a 'whistling-shop' is a place where ardent liquors are secretly sold. There is a large profit attached to the trade; and though heavy fine and close imprisonment in the strong-room are penalties imposed on delinquents when detected, yet some are continually found ready to brave all consequences, and, by the aid of judicious bribes, to carry on their profitable calling as long as they are prisoners.

"Let us now close this picture of prison existence, and draw a veil over abominations that never can exist again. Sufficient has been stated to give our readers an insight into a phase of life which we devoutly trust they may never be personally cognisant of, but which even a 'good man' is liable to. The first hearing before the Insolvent Court Commissioner is always a trying matter to the nerves; mine was peculiarly so, because the debt for which I was 'nabbed' was not an ordinary trade-debt, but a liability incurred through thoughtlessness and misplaced good-nature. The result of the interview with the Commissioner was a

remand. When I was relegated to the warder of the Queen's Bench, my comforts and liberty were curtailed; I was introduced into that portion of the prison where the sight of the iron bars to the windows gave me a prophetic foreboding of what might happen in my case. I was really and truly in 'durance vile.' What my sensations were, I shall not inflict on my readers; suffice it to say, that I lost my pluck—I became downhearted—and at twenty-three began to look with misanthropic vision on the world and the world's law. Three days passed in this desponding mood; on the fourth, late in the evening, the turnkey called me out, and briefly informed me that my discharge was lodged at the gate. How this was accomplished, I hardly comprehend even now; but the fact was indisputable. It was too late to be released that night, but the next morning I found I might consider myself as free as air. I went to bed in a kind of doubtful dreaminess; I hardly realised my own existence; every thing had changed: the prison was not the same; the inhabitants were not the same; my feelings were not the same. The next morning I rose, leisurely packed up my movables, and distributed, with the air of a magnate, my prison requisites, and made sundry hangers-on happy by leaving them a reversion of that kind of property which, though useful in the Bench, would have been utterly valueless *out*. When I found myself once more outside the walls, a free agent, I tasted for the first time the exquisite sweets of liberty. Three friends welcomed me; and I recollect keenly to this day the matchless relish with which the first draught

of pale ale and the first mouthful of pork-pie, the only luxuries within reach at the time, were welcomed."

So ends the narrative of the writer of the above ; and I have pleasure in announcing that, in a more enlarged form, these "Queen's Bench Recollections" are likely to appear before the public.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

### *Old Bailey Sessions, 1832.*

OLD MOULDY v. CARROTY BOB.

To those who know the Old Bailey only through newspaper reports, the place conveys nothing but impressions of a sad and sombre character. To such persons the locality is associated with all that is criminal and atrocious in society. The murderer, the footpad, the burglar, and other culprits who come within the operation of the criminal statutes, are only present in the mind's eye, and in connexion with those awful punishments which are the legal consequences of their offences. Occasionally, however, courts of justice present scenes and incidents entirely comic in character ; and in former times, before the alteration of the law, this description of cases was very frequent during the long sessions. As some of the charges rested on very doubtful evidence, and were in themselves of a very trivial character,—the rage for committal then being prevalent among the magistracy,—the judicial investigation of them very amusingly relieved the heaviness

and gloom incidental to the trying of capital offences. In the sessions of 18—, a case in which the comic predominated was tried before a late recorder. The accused party was one Robert Higgins, commonly called "Carrot Bob," a chimney-sweep and nightman, and the charge against him was for "prigging"—in legal phrase, "feloniously stealing"—a new full-bottomed fan-tail, the property of Samuel Wells, better known as "Old Mouldy," a coal-whipper. The East-End celebrity of the parties caused the case to excite, as the newspaper scribes would say, "intense interest" among their respective friends; and the court and its avenues were consequently crowded by a motley assemblage of the denizens of Duck Lane, Short's Gardens, and the fragrant back settlements of Wapping. Costermongers, chummies, scavengers, and coal-heavers might be seen in full conclave, arguing on the merits of the pending trial, and backing their prognostications of the result by wagers of "pots of heavy," or drops round of "summut short."

As soon as the court opened, and the "judges were met, a terrible show," the crier called silence, and Carrot Bob was placed at the bar.

A buzz of approbation from his numerous friends broke forth as the prisoner, with much pomposity, took his place, ducked to the bench, bobbed graciously to the jury, and flung a few recognitory nods to his "pals" in the gallery.

It may be here proper to mention, that Mister Robert Higgins's popularity resulted by no means from a sudden impulse which honest, hard-working Britons

sometimes feel towards a brother when unexpectedly overtaken by trouble; on the contrary, "Mister Bob" for a length of time had enjoyed an extensive reputation among his pot-and-pipe associates as a "vide-awake covey,"—in short, "von who'd the gift of the gab, and got his nob screwed on the right vay," and who was justly entitled to the cognomen of the chummies' "Attorney-General." This, coupled with an intimation which had got wind that he meant to act as his "own counsel," and to conduct the defence himself, caused the remarkable muster we have just noticed.

*Clerk of the Arraignment.* Robert Higgins, you stand indited for that you, on the 14th of April last, in the parish of Marylebone, did then and there feloniously steal, take, and carry away one coal-heaver's hat, the property of one Samuel Wells, and of the value of three shillings and sixpence, good and lawful money of Great Britain. Are you guilty or not guilty?

*Bob.* I pleads as I'm perfect innercent.

*Clerk of the Arraignment.* You mean to say you are not guilty. Is it so?

*Bob.* Vot I mean to say, and vot I mean to say I'll svear to, is, 'at I ain't guilty—I never vos guilty—and nobody can't prove me guilty. (*Great applause from the gallery.*)

*Crier.* Silence in court! Officers, keep silence. Samuel Wells, the prosecutor, come forward.

"Old Mouldy," a *sobriquet*, from the appearance of the man, selected with perfect judgment, ascended the witness-box, and took the Testament for the purpose of being sworn.

*Bob.* Vait a bit. Afore that ere waggerbon takes a false hoath, I wants to know vether he knows the nater of von.

*Recorder.* You may put what questions you please to the prosecutor on that head ; but, prisoner, the court cannot allow you to make use of epithets such as you have just used.

*Prisoner* (with a Whitechapel bow). Axes parding of your hunlightened ludship, and them there hintelligible gemmen of the jury. I nose vot I'm arter ; and you sha'n't find me misbehave myself with the laws vich coincide to s'ciety. Now, then, old Mouldy, afore you takes yer hoath, I want to ax yer vere yer mean to go arter yer dead.

*Prosecutor* (scratching his head). Vy—I s'pose—nobody can't jest say.

*Bob.* There, my lud and gemmen of the jury ; mark that 'ere. Here's a rum un, to vant to take his hoath ven he can't anser sitch a simple kvestion. Now I'll put to you, as tvelve hintelligible, hindipendent hindiiduals, *can* any on yer believe a verd he's a-going to say ?

*Recorder.* Prisoner, the court is always sorry to interrupt a person conducting his own defence ; but you have put your question in a way that is not very intelligible. The court will put it for you.

The prosecutor was here questioned ; and his answers being considered satisfactory, the oath was administered in the customary form.

*Recorder.* Now, prosecutor, state how you lost your hat.

*Prosecutor.* I'd got a sarcepan vich vonted new bottoming; so I claps on my new fantail to go to the tinker's; and ven I'd got my job done, I naterrally stept into the Three Compasses to have a drain. It vos a howdashus hot day; and being in a muck of sweat, vy I takes hoff my tile, and lays it on the bench, jest close to vere the prisoner, Carroty Bob—as I know'd—vos a having a blow-out of vinkles. He says to me, sis he, "Vill yer 'gaff' for a qvartern?" "Newmarket, or sudden death?" sis I. "Newmarket," sis he. "Done!" sis I. "Done!" sis he; and done and done is qvite enough between gemmen.

*Bob.* Mind this here, gemmen of the jury. He says I vent "Newmarket." I've spindled six vittnesses to prove as I never tosses no other vay than "sudden death."

*Prosecutor.* Vell, ve had in the qvarterns; and then ve kept on a-tossing, till somehow I got werry hunaccountable tight, and vent off in a reg'lar snooze. Ven I voke, I diskivered 'at my fantail had mizzled.

*Recorder.* And how do you know the prisoner took away your hat?

*Prosecutor.* 'Cause I swore it afore the beak; and more 'an that, 'cause I cotched it on his nob, as he vos chiveying down Shoreditch.

*Recorder.* Prisoner, if you wish to put any questions to this witness, you have an opportunity.

*Prisoner.* Now, old Mouldy, look this 'ere vay. Tell them there honest, hintelligible gemmen in that 'ere box vich is easiest, picking oakum, or going up

the ladder (working with his feet, as if on the tread-wheel).

*Prosecutor.* Tell 'em yourself; you nose as well as me.

*Prisoner.* Answer without no invasions. Ven vos you last valking up-stairs, and never getting no higher—so? (marching with his feet in dock).

*Prosecutor.* It ain't convenient to recollect.

*Prisoner.* Oh, werry well; and I s'pose you expects the gemmen of the jury to believe vot you've said agin me. Now, hon your hoath, don't yer?

*Prosecutor.* I should think so.

*Prisoner.* After that, I sha'n't ax you no further questions. Your himperence only exceeds yer beauty. You may go down.

*Recorder.* Now, prisoner, you can state what you have to say in your defence.

*Prisoner.* My lud and gemmen of this 'ere 'spectable jury, I'm kivered vith consarn to be hobligated to hoccupy yer wallyble time vith sitch a pack of precious nonsense vot you've been a-hearing on. But, my lud and gemmen of the jury, in justice to myself, in justice to my vife and kids, and in justice to every body and von more, I begs leave to lay the hole "factotum" of this here consarn—this wile conspiracy—this 'ere willanus case, bottom'd on sperjery agin a honest man—afore this 'ere court. My lud and gemmen of the jury, last Michaelmas-day (here the prisoner called a proper quantity of pathos into his countenance, pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped his eyes)—ax parding again—but I can't help feeling as a man, and

showing it as a man—can't help looking at the difference of my sittivation in the hies of society. *Then* I vos huniwersally respected by the hole world. *Now* I'm a criminal vith the laws of my country put upon me; and vether I'm guilty or hinnocent, I must be teetotally ruinated for ever. *Then* I vos yarning thirty bob a week, and s'porting a vife and six hinfant babbies in the highest state of perfection. *Now*, I ain't got a dump to guv 'em, and I'm haggrawated still further to know as all on 'em is at home breaking their tender hearts at the onpleasant sittivation vich the willany of human nature has shoved me into (*wipes his eyes*). Oh, my lud and gemmen of the jury, on'y think of the feelings of your hown'hamiable vives and lovely babbies, if you were to change sittivations vith me, and to have to hanser for the crime of stealing a coalheaver's tile not worth more 'an three bob and a tanner! My lud and gemmen of the jury, it's vun great happiness to know as sitch a him-partial judge and sitch a hintelligible and unlightened jury has got to try my case, 'cause I feels conwincied you're not to be gammoned no how, and that you means to hact upright and downstraight, like reg'lar trumps as I nose yer all are. My lud and gemmen of the jury, here's the consarn: Michaelmas-day vos wery vet, and so I vent into the Three Compasses just to dry my toggerly and get a bit of grub. During this 'ere present moment I sees "old Mouldy" lushing by hisself in von corner. Now, my lud and gemmen of the jury, as I know'd Mouldy, and as I always acts perlite—vich is my carracter—I says to him, "Vell, Mouldy, how's missis?" "Oh, nicely," says he, "except," says he, "het

old complaints of the rumbeggar (lumbago) in her lines." Vell, my lud and gemmen of the jury, ve vent on discoursing, till Mouldy says, "I've got the price of a qvarthen about me; vill you have a fly?" Ve tosses, and I vins; and arter that, I give him his rewenge as vos hon'rable and proper, and ve tosses, hand I loses. "Now," sis I, "you're von and I'm von; here goes first toss who is to pay both." "Done," says he. "Nob," says I. "Petticoat," says he; and nob it vos. Now here's the artful pint, my lud and gemmen of the jury: Mouldy wanted to svear as it vos a foul toss, and tried to bring it to a wrangle. "No," says I. "Mouldy, if yer *are* a man, hact as a man, and don't do nuffin to reconcile yerself out of that 'ere carracter." "Vell," says he, "matey, I ain't got no tin; take my new tile, and go and shov it up the flue for a bob." Vell, my lud and gemmen of the jury, I grants his demand, and vent to spout it; but they wouldn't take it in at the pop-shop, I s'pose cause as how it vorn't the fashionable shape vich slap-up sveall coalheavers had took to wear-ing. So you see, my lud and gemmen of the jury, I vos hobligated to lend the bob out of my own breeches; and then, as vos natteral, 'cause I know'd old Mouldy vos a slippery cove, I kept the tile till he come down with the dust. This, my lud and gemmen of the jury, is the teetotal of all I've got to say: On your von hand you've got a waggerbon as you plainly sees vill svear to hany thing; on t'other, you've a man of family—for I've got eight on 'em to keep—who has never had no misdemeannour agin him, and whose got a waluable carracter, vich you shall all on you hear from my vittnesses.

And, gemmen of the jury, for the enlightened hattention vich you've showed throughout the case, I feels conwinned as you'll give me the werry great pleasure of congratulating you on your werdick, vich vill hon'rabable acquit me.

The prisoner made a low bow to the jury, bent to the judge, and as soon as the applause in the gallery had subsided, said :

" Call Bill Harris to carracter."

Bill Harris got into the witness-box.

*Prisoner.* Now, Bill, how long have yer know'd me?

*Bill.* Vy, afore you vos born up to the present time.

*Prisoner.* Did yer hever see me prig nothing?

*Bill.* Never did.

*Prisoner* (nodding to jury). You hear that, gemmen? I ain't got any thing furdur to ax him.

*Recorder.* Stop, witness. Do you know any thing in favour of the prisoner's honesty?

*Bill.* Oh, yes; ven I vos my pint, he vos always his'n.

*Recorder.* I mean, does he bear a good character?

*Bill.* An out-and-outer; I'll back him to go up and down a flue agin any man in London; and as to knock-'em-downs, vy, I've knowed him giv a rum customer five chalks out of nine.

*Recorder.* And that's all you know, I suppose?

*Bill.* Yes; don't see how nobody can't have no better carracter 'an vot I've given Bob.

The Recorder, without summing up, left the case

with the jury, who immediately returned a ver  
"not guilty."

A shout of approbation was raised in the g  
Bob bowed round for the last time, laid his hand  
heart, and with his hankerchief to his eyes was l  
of the dock.

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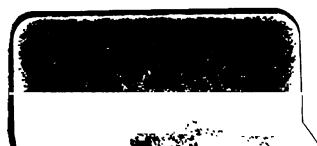
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